

Bum Deal

by

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Based upon the book "A Bum Deal" by Barry Soper

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FADE IN:

EXT. AN ASPHALT LOT BEHIND A GROCERY STORE - NIGHT

Beneath the dim glow of a night lamp one man brutally beats another with a two by four piece of lumber. WHIMPERING from the victim is audible as is the sound of a leg bone cracking. Nearby are five teens, three boys and two girls. One teen boy is filming the event, the rest are acting as catalyst, goading and cheering the attacker to continue.

ZACH

Fuck him up Rufus!

MIKE

Shit! He's gonna kill the bum.

RUFUS (V.O.)

There comes a moment in the life of every man when he hits his lowest point...This was mine. The man I was beating did nothing to deserve it. He had never raised his hand to me or spoken an unkind word. He was in fact, my friend. So where does someone find the courage to kill a good friend? Simple, he gets it from his best friend.

We focus in on the bottle of vodka ZACH is holding; indicating alcohol is RUFUS' best friend.

DISSOLVE TO:

SUPERIMPOSE: "SEVERAL MONTHS EARLIER"

INT. A BAR IN A SMALL GEORGIAN TOWN - NIGHT

The familiar faces of a local hangout are performing their nightly ritual of drinking, carousing, and playing pool. A juke box plays a country tune. It is being caressed by SALLY, an attractive but obviously bored young woman. She sensually eyes the magnetic frame of RUFUS, a thirty something good looking homegrown man. He is sitting at the bar finishing off the last of several beers from which he has built a glass pyramid. Seated next to RUFUS is DONNIE. Also in his thirties, DONNIE is the polar opposite of RUFUS. Large and unfit, he is a stuttering simple minded follower of his idol. He is intensely loyal and ready to do RUFUS' bidding at asking. RUFUS finally notices the sexually charged woman who has been waiting for her opportunity. She radiates heat as she makes her way to him.

SALLY

Bout time you noticed me Rufus.

RUFUS

I've been noticing you for a long time Sally.

SALLY

You aint never done nothing bout it. A girl can get a complex you know...wonderin if she's got what a man wants.

RUFUS

Don't tell me Charlie there hasn't given you some peace of mind.

A couple of young studs, Charlie and his friend are barely old enough to drink. They are engrossed in a game of pool.

SALLY

Charlie? He's just a boy; you're a man...with manly shoulders...

She starts to explore his body with her hands.

SALLY (CONT)

...a powerful chest...strong
arms...sensuous hands. I love the
feel of sensuous hands. I love to
be felt by sensuous hands.

As she rubs RUFUS' hands along her curvaceous body Charlie
appears and jabs RUFUS in the back with his pool stick.

CHARLIE

You lookin to go home a cripple
Rufus?

DONNIE has been taking in the whole scene. He rises from
his bar stool and defiantly grabs hold of the pool stick.

CHARLIE (CONT)

This don't concern you Donnie. Set
your stutterin fat ass back down.

Three friends come to back up Charlie.

RUFUS

Now why did you have to go and
call him a name like that? I think
he might have hurt feelins...Your
feelins hurt Donnie?

DONNIE

(With a stutter)

T-terrible like.

RUFUS

If you got to put somebody down
it's just because you feel
inferior yourself. You some way
inferior Charlie? Sally seems to
think so.

Charlie is incensed. He jerks free the stick and raises it
to attack, but before he can deliver a blow RUFUS strikes
him in the face with one of his empty beer bottles.
Charlie's friends enter the fight but are overmatched by
the one imposing figure of DONNIE. RUFUS continues to pound
CHARLIE even after it is obvious he is no longer a threat.

RUFUS
(To the bystanders)
Sorry for the mess boys...

He gives SALLY a toe curling kiss.

RUFUS (CONT)
...C'mon Donnie.

RUFUS gathers the beers CHARLIE and his friends had been drinking at the pool table and makes haste for the exit.

CUT TO:

EXT. OUTSIDE THE BAR - A BEAT LATER

RUFUS and DONNIE pile into an older model pickup truck. Whooping and hollering they spin their wheels, spraying loose gravel in every direction and head out onto the road.

INT. THE PICKUP TRUCK - A MOMENT LATER

Still feeling the adrenalin.

DONNIE
(Stuttering)
Y-You you showed em Rrrufus. You got em ggood.

RUFUS
Them boys didn't show you no respect Donnie. If there's one thing in this life you gotta keep, it's your respect. You let people disrespect you and you might as well be a cowering dog. You deserve a beatin.

DONNIE
Well I think we ggot some respect in there. I-I think they gonna like us now.

RUFUS

I wouldn't go so far as to say that, but they'll damn sure remember us.
Hey Donnie, how come when you get all excited you do that stutterin stuff?

DONNIE

I ddunno. My heart starts pounddin and it all builds up insside me I ccan't seem to get the words out. I ddon't want to do it.

RUFUS

I know...just seems people might think better of you if you didn't.

DONNIE

Do you think bad of me Rufus?

RUFUS

Hell no! Makes no difference to me if you talked Chinese. We're a team...always gonna be a team...right?

DONNIE

Right.

RUFUS looks into his mirror to see a flashing red light soon followed by the sound of a SIREN.

RUFUS

Son-of-a-bitch.

DONNIE

What?

RUFUS

Hurry, ditch the beers.

DONNIE throws the beer bottles out the window one by one. They pummel the sheriff's car.

DONNIE

Keep g-going Rrrufus. Don't stop.

RUFUS

We'd never make it to the state line. He'd have a dozen cars waitin for us. Damn...let me do the talking...you don't say a word, ya got that? This prick...he wouldn't make a pimple on a real sheriff's ass.

The two cars pull off to the side of the road. The sheriff has been licking his chops waiting for this moment. He slaps a baton in one hand as he approaches RUFUS.

SHERIFF

Rufus.

RUFUS

Sheriff.

SHERIFF

Donnie...You boys left quite a mess back at Hal's place.

RUFUS

Just a slight misunderstanding.

SHERIFF

Misunderstanding? Face split open, missing teeth, broked ribs.

RUFUS

Yeah, well I did say it was slight.

SHERIFF

What about you Donnie?

DONNIE remains silent as he looks to RUFUS for help.

SHERIFF (CONT)

What's the matter? You got nothing to say? Just a misunderstanding? Do you even understand a God damn thing boy?

DONNIE is primed to explode like MT. ST. HELENS

DONNIE

I-I understand y-you would'nt make
a pimpppple on a real ssheriff's
ass!

RUFUS drops his head and places his hands over his eyes not
wanting or needing to see the sheriff's reaction.

CUT TO:

INT. JAIL - NEXT MORNING

RUFUS and DONNIE are jailed in separate cells facing each
other. RUFUS is stretched out on his cot. DONNIE is on his
feet at the bars suffering from separation anxiety.

DONNIE

Why we got different cells Rufus?
Why can't we be together?

RUFUS

Because they know if you were in
here with me I'd strangle you.
Couldn't keep your mouth shut
could you.

DONNIE

I'm ssorry Rufus. Don't be mad at
me. He ffooled me into talking.
We're still ffriends, right Rufus?

RUFUS

What am I going to do with you
Donnie? There's got to be some
damn good reason I'm stuck with
you.

DONNIE

Yeah, yeah, there's a ddamn good
reason...you'll ssee.

Outside the jail a car pulls up and parks. Out steps the
sheriff's daughter, DARLA. She's a few days over the legal
limit and ready to spread her wings. Dressed in a low
buttoned tight sweater-shirt with an equally tight mini-
skirt she carries with her two trays of food, the morning
breakfast. DONNIE sees her coming from his barred window.

DONNIE

BBreakfast is here Rufus,
bbreakfast!

DARLA sets one of the trays down on the sheriff's desk and grabs the cell keys.

DARLA

Hello boys...hungry?

DONNIE

Sure am MMiss Darla...Smells ggood.

DARLA

My daddy said I could come by early and give you boys a little something special. You interested in a little something special Rufus?

She opens DONNIE'S cell door and bends over to place the tray down and slide it into his cell. RUFUS can't help but watch her skirt rise to reveal the absence of underwear. DARLA glances back, pleased that RUFUS is watching.

DARLA

Your turn Rufus. You getting up?

RUFUS

Oh yeah.

DARLA

You got any hidden weapon I should know about?

RUFUS

You want to frisk me?

She opens the cell door and begins her examination. Starting at his ankles she slowly runs her hands up the inside of his legs. Both hands convene at his crotch. She rises; still caressing him, pressing so close RUFUS can no longer contain his composure. In seemingly one motion he lifts her skirt and drops his pants. They dive onto they cot in a moment of uncontrolled passion. DONNIE has been engrossed in his meal until finally noticing.

DONNIE

Rufus?

RUFUS

Stick your face out that window
and don't you dare say a word.

DONNIE obeys; all the while not sure of what to make of the SOUNDS he is hearing from them. His attention shifts to the arrival of the sheriff's car.

DONNIE

Rufus?

RUFUS

Dammit! Don't you ever learn? Not
a single word!

DONNIE

But, Rufus.

RUFUS

I swear after I get done here I'm
gonna come over there and beat you
silly.

The sheriff enters the building. He sees the tray of food still sitting on his desk and hears the MOANING of his daughter in the next room. He rushes in to find a spectacle no father should ever witness. He reaches for his gun.

SHERIFF

I'll kill you...you bastard!

The sheriff starts to take aim when the long arm of DONNIE grabs him and slams him against the cell bars. The gun fires and falls from his hand. RUFUS is jolted to his senses. He leaves DARLA to drag her father into the same cell. He grabs the keys and locks them in. He then unlocks DONNIE'S cell and they flee.

RUFUS

C'mon let's go!

DONNIE

W-Where we g-goin?

RUFUS

I don't know, but anywhere far
away from here.

The two desperados run outside and jump into the sheriff's
patrol car, burning rubber on their way to who knows where.

CUT TO:

INT. PATROL CAR - A SHORT TIME LATER

RUFUS and DONNIE have now officially crossed the line with
the law. They are heading down the highway at rapid pace.
DONNIE plays with the buttons on the dash and inadvertently
turns on the flashing lights and siren.

RUFUS

Turn that stuff off. We don't need
to attract any more attention.

DONNIE

At least we aint in no cage.

RUFUS

For the time being. If we get
caught stealin a sheriff's car
your permanent address is gonna be
a cage. We gotta make it to the
state line then ditch this car or
else this thing will stick out
like a sore thumb in Bama.

The car approaches a sign... "Now entering Alabama".

RUFUS

Look for a lake or a river or
somethin.

Further down the road DONNIE spots a lake.

DONNIE

Over there.

RUFUS

Yeah, that might do...

RUFUS drives the car off the road and to the edge of a
lake. They get out and RUFUS puts the car in neutral.

RUFUS (CONT)

..Ready? Heave.

They start pushing but the car stalls halfway in.

RUFUS (CONT)

Just great...now what?

DONNIE takes matters into his own hands and charges the car like a rhino. His collision actually leaves a dent in the vehicle but he gets it rolling again and into the lake. Suddenly he finds himself over his head in water.

DONNIE

H-help, Rufus h-help m-me!

RUFUS

Help you? Help you what? Just swim on out.

DONNIE

C-Can't swim!

RUFUS

Start learnin.

DONNIE

Ru RU

DONNIE starts to go under. RUFUS debates with himself but can no longer ignore his guilty feeling. Mumbling and cursing under his breath RUFUS enters the lake and drags DONNIE to firm ground.

RUFUS

What are you doin? Do you think I'm, suppose to rescue you every time you do somethin stupid? What if I wasn't here?

DONNIE

I'd be ddead.

RUFUS

Maybe you'd be better off dead.
Ever think of that? Maybe I'd be
better off if you were dead...C'mon,
how are we gonna get someone to
give us a ride drippin wet?

CUT TO:

EXT. ON THE ROAD - DAY

RUFUS and DONNIE are soaking wet sitting in the back of a
pick up. A collection of chickens in cages surrounds them
as they travel down the road.

CUT TO:

EXT. A SMALL TOWN IN ALABAMA - NIGHT

The pick up stops long enough for RUFUS and DONNIE to hop
out and tap on the truck.

RUFUS

Thanks man.

DONNIE

Where do you think we are?

RUFUS

Don't know, Alabama somewhere.

DONNIE

I'm kkinda hungry.

RUFUS

How much money you got on ya?

DONNIE

(Counting it out)

Thirty sseven and change.

RUFUS

Well I got eighty four dollars. I
need a drink.

DONNIE

Me too.

They spot a local watering hole close by and venture inside

INT. TOWN BAR - A FEW HOURS LATER THAT NIGHT

RUFUS and DONNIE have numbed the trauma of the day with several shots and beers. They have used the money for booze, while suppressing their hunger with a combination of free peanuts, pretzels, and popcorn. Several bowls are lined up on their table to attest to the fact. At the bar a weathered OLD WOMAN has been studying them. She has an aura about her that is eerie. Definitely the reason no one sits close to her or has spoken to her all night. RUFUS has noticed her stares but has been avoiding direct eye contact. She finally rises from her stool to approach them.

OLD WOMAN

Are you boys running from something?

RUFUS

Isn't everybody?

OLD WOMAN

Running from...or running to.

RUFUS

Well, we probably fit in there somewhere.

OLD WOMAN

You already know what you're running from. Do you want me to tell you what you're running to?

RUFUS

What's the cost?

OLD WOMAN

A pour from that bottle.

RUFUS

Sure, why not...help yourself.

She sits, pours herself a shot and takes it in one swallow.

OLD WOMAN

Give me your hand.

RUFUS does so. The OLD WOMAN begins an intense study of his hand. She becomes increasingly disturbed.

OLD WOMAN (CONT)

The path you are going down is going to gnaw at your soul. The further your lifeline, the deeper the torment. Hate...combined with despair...very serious signs.

RUFUS

Sounds like fun times. Anything good in there?

OLD WOMAN

You have a love line that tries to intersect... change the course.

RUFUS

That's good to know. At least I'll have something to bang.

OLD WOMAN

Advise from an old woman? Get yourself out of that deep trench before it caves in on you and you're trapped-permanent.

RUFUS is visibly stunned by her concern and serious tone. He changes the subject to break the tension.

RUFUS

So much for the good news. What about him?

She takes the bottle and pours another shot which she downs immediately. She takes DONNIE'S hand. After a moment the blood in her face seemingly vanishes and her expression becomes stoic.

OLD WOMAN

I can tell nothing from this hand.

RUFUS

C'mon, you already got paid.

OLD WOMAN

I am not always right.

RUFUS

Then tell us a lie.

OLD WOMAN

(With reluctance)

You have never had a life of your own...you never will. Confusion, torture, weeping...no relief. God save your soul from drowning.

DONNIE is confused and shaken by her words. The moment is thick with tension which RUFUS tries to break.

RUFUS

We already know he can't swim.

OLD WOMAN

I'm sorry I came to you.

RUFUS

No, no don't be sorry. Have another drink.

OLD WOMAN

No.

She leaves them to return to her isolation.

RUFUS

God damn scam fortune tellers.

CUT TO:

EXT. A PARK - MORNING

RUFUS and DONNIE are passed out in the town's park. They have covered themselves with newspaper to help keep warm. Their appearance is increasingly more slovenly. They sport a few days growth of beard and still smell from the previous day's escapades. Nearby, children are playing as a police officer walks over and prods them with his stick.

POLICE OFFICER

All right fellas, get up...you gotta get movin.

RUFUS tries to shake off his hangover.

RUFUS

Hey, we aint botherin nobody.

POLICE OFFICER

Still gotta move on. Park's not for camping.

RUFUS

What if we sleep in the swings?

POLICE OFFICER

Don't try me. Just move along. Get yourselves a motel room.

RUFUS

Can't...got no cash.

The officer eyes several empty bottles of booze nearby.

POLICE OFFICER

Yeah, I can see why. Listen, if you need some help go see Pastor Jim. He runs the church down around that corner...can't miss it. Dry out, clean up, get yourself a meal, and tell him Burl sent you over.

CUT TO:

EXT. A FIELD OF DIRT - DAY

A solitary man sweats and grunts while he diligently tries to hoe a field. He is PASTOR JIM, a man in his sixties, lean and learned of God. He stops his work for a moment to wipe his brow. In looking up he sees RUFUS and DONNIE studying him.

RUFUS

Whatcha growin?

PASTOR JIM

Apparently rocks.

RUFUS

Looks like a bumper crop.

PASTOR JIM

Well, I always did have a granite thumb. My name is Jim Campion. I'm the pastor of the church cross the street. What are your names?

RUFUS

I'm Rufus. This here's Donnie.

PASTOR JIM

You got last names?

RUFUS

Last time I checked.

PASTOR JIM

Men who don't want to tell their last names usually got a reason for it.

RUFUS

Could have lied to you and made up a name.

PASTOR JIM

That you could have. I respect you for not, and I'll respect your privacy...You passing through town?

RUFUS

Pretty much...we were sleepin in the park. Officer Burl roused us...thought you might be able to help out.

PASTOR JIM

That is why we're here on this earth...to help one another... See that shack over there?

He points to a small one room building.

PASTOR JIM (CONT)

...It's not much to look at, just one room, but it's clean and it's got a shower. You're welcome to stay awhile, but I've got rules.

DONNIE

W-What kinda rrules?

PASTOR JIM

This is church property. No drugs, no booze, and no women.

RUFUS

We aint got no money for the collection plate.

PASTOR JIM

Didn't ask for any.

RUFUS

(To DONNIE)

You think we should take the pastor up on his offer?

DONNIE

I think tthat would be a ggood thing. I think that wwould be a rreal good thing.

RUFUS

Thank you sir.

PASTOR JIM

You're welcome sir.

There is an immediate respect generated between the two men as they shake hands. PASTOR JIM extends his hand to DONNIE who enthusiastically embraces it.

PASTOR JIM

You two go check out the place and get washed up. There are some razors in the bathroom and I'm sure we've got some clean clothes that'll fit you.

(To DONNIE)

I might have to search a little harder for you. When is the last time you two boys had a home cooked meal?

DONNIE

Long time...not ssince Miss DDarla come to ssee us in..

DONNIE catches a dirty stare from RUFUS.

DONNIE (CONT)

..Miss Darla ccome to sse us wwith some food. My stomach been talking up a sstorm to me.

PASTOR JIM

Then you're invited over to the house for dinner. Good food, good portions. Just make sure you compliment my wife on her china plates. She got them handed down from her great grandmother. Kinda like a family heirloom.

CUT TO:

INT. PASTOR JIM'S HOME - EVENING

There is a knock at the door. PASTOR JIM'S wife MARTHA goes to answer it. She is a pleasant looking lady. Around her waist is an apron. She opens the door to find RUFUS and DONNIE dressed in the new clothes she provided for them. They are washed and shaved with their hair combed. The clothes give them a sense of respectability.

MARTHA

Come in, come in. Don't you two look just wonderful? My name is Martha. I'm Pastor Jim's wife. From his description you must be Rufus and you are Donnie.

DONNIE

That's rright mmam.

MARTHA

Well you're just in time, dinner is just about ready. Would you like to take a seat at the table? Jim will be down in a minute.

RUFUS and DONNIE sit at the table and examine the china.

RUFUS

I don't think I've ever eaten off anything this nice before.

DONNIE holds up a plate and looks at this reflection.

DONNIE

I can see myself in this pplate. Makes me feel kinda funny with the nice place they ggive us to stay, new clothes, fancy dishes, wwhat did we do to deserve this?

RUFUS

Nothin I can figure.

PASTOR JIM enters accompanied by MARTHA who is carrying a tray loaded with fried chicken. PASTOR JIM bellows an exuberant greeting.

PASTOR JIM

Hello boys!

DONNIE is startled and drops the china dish. The dish shatters. There is a tense moment where everyone realizes the extent of what just happened. MARTHA breaks from her frozen position and continues nonchalantly to place the food on the table.

MARTHA

Don't you think twice about that
Donnie. It's a set of six. I have
another one to take its place.

She leaves and soon returns with another plate. She
trustingly places it in DONNIE'S hands. She then sweeps up
the broken pieces to throw them away while PASTOR JIM takes
his seat.

DONNIE

(To PASTOR JIM)

I-I'm so ssorry.

PASTOR JIM

It's just a plate Donnie. In the
end it's all going to burn up
anyway... I hope you boys are
hungry, Martha has outdone herself
tonight.

RUFUS

Yes sir.

DONNIE

I'm hhungry mmost all the time.

PASTOR JIM

Well that's good. Take all you
want and pass it on.

RUFUS and DONNIE fill their plates high and immediately
start to devour the meal. PASTOR JIM and MARTHA also put
food on their plates but bow their heads to pray, totally
catching RUFUS and DONNIE off guard.

PASTOR JIM

Heavenly father we thank you for
the food you have provided this
day to nourish our bodies and
allow us to continue the work of
sharing the good news of
salvation. Thank you father for
our guests Rufus and Donnie. I ask
that you provide for their needs,
physical, emotional and spiritual.

(MORE)

PASTOR JIM (CONT'D)

Bring them to a greater understanding of your perfect love. In Jesus' name I pray, amen...Well what are you waiting for...dig in.

CUT TO:

INT. PASTOR JIM'S HOME - LATER THAT EVENING

Everyone has had their fill, especially DONNIE. His plate is full of chicken bones. He finally throws in the towel and wipes his mouth with no room left in his belly.

RUFUS

(Jokingly)

You can see m'am, we didn't like that meal one bit.

DONNIE

(Astonished)

I-I did. I ttruly did m'am. It was ddelicious.

MARTHA

I believe you Donnie. I'm pleased you enjoyed it. I'll just take away these plates and be back with some apple pie and ice cream.

MARTHA stacks the plates and leaves.

DONNIE

SSure is a nice llady Pastor Jim.

PASTOR JIM

That she is, a very special woman. God has blessed me in more ways than I can count. How about you boys?

RUFUS

What? Blessings? I'm afraid me and God don't get along together. I don't think he likes me.

PASTOR JIM

Now why would you think that?

RUFUS

I aint never had no blessings,
none my whole life. I nearly died
at birth, a premature baby of an
alcoholic mother. She use to put
booze in my baby bottle to knock
me out...keep me from cryin. I grew
up bein just another chore for her
to bitch about.

My old man cared even less for me.
He was always strung out on
somethin. He hated comin home, and
I hated to see him come home.
There'd always be screamin and
yellin, then sooner or later it
would always come down to me.
Seemed like I was the reason for
all their problems.

We moved every few months to avoid
the bill collectors. Never did
make any real friends...just the old
drunks in the shadows of every
town who'd play cards all day,
swappin dreams...lies.

I stopped goin to school. Those
bums became my real
teachers...school of life. When my
father found out I'd been ditchin
school he took a baseball bat and
whacked me alongside my head. I
was half conscious but heard him
say if I wasn't already worthless,
he'd make damn sure of it. He took
every one of my fingers and
snapped it in two. He didn't want
me to be able to even feed myself,
much less work. If it weren't for
those drunken old men I'd be dead.
They fed me, kept me warm, took
care of me...They became my new
family, and never went back to my
other one again.

PASTOR JIM

Sounds like there was a blessing mixed in there somewhere.

RUFUS

The bums? Maybe so, but if they were the only good people in my life, why does God hate them?

PASTOR JIM

You've got it backwards Rufus. God loves them, and he loves you too. More than you could ever imagine. So much that he gave his own son as a sacrifice so you could be with him forever. It's a free gift. All you have to do is ask.

RUFUS

Aint nothing free Pastor Jim. God would want me to give up all my fun.

PASTOR JIM

Fun? Is that what you call passing out in the park? Your body convulsing, crying out for another fix to keep the demons away. Lying, stealing, and cheating good people so as to keep your senses dulled. So you don't have to think about the pit your life has fallen into. Is it really all that much fun Rufus?

RUFUS

Sounds like you have some first hand experience.

PASTOR JIM

I've been down the road you're traveling. I know where it leads to. God has forgotten my sins but I can't. There came a point where I couldn't handle my life anymore.

(MORE)

PASTOR JIM (CONT'D)

I had made a total mess of it. I was going to end it, but God said "no...start over. Do not fear. Put your troubles on my shoulders and I will give you peace. Let me into your life and I will make you a new creation."

That was the moment my life became fun. Rufus, Donnie, I'd hate to see you go down the wrong road. God has a plan for your life. He will work all things together for a good purpose if you'll let him.

RUFUS

I'm afraid God's gonna need a crowbar to pry me away from Satan's grasp.

PASTOR JIM

He's got one. It's called the cross. When you're ready Rufus, God will be waiting with open arms. Scripture says the angels rejoice when one sinner repents.

RUFUS

Well tell them not to break out the party hats just yet.

CUT TO:

INT. PASTOR JIM'S HOME - THE NEXT MORNING

PASTOR JIM and MARTHA are sleeping in bed. The window is open and from it can be heard the sound of metal hitting earth and rock in a rhythmic beat. MARTHA rises to look out the window then returns and wakes up PASTOR JIM.

MARTHA

Jim, Jim get up and take a look.

He obediently does so and while trying to wipe the sleep from his eyes he sees RUFUS and DONNIE hoeing the field he had been vainly working on the day before.

CUT TO:

EXT. THE FIELD OF DIRT - A SHORT TIME LATER

RUFUS and DONNIE back in their work clothes have churned up a goodly portion of the field. PASTOR JIM walks up to them with a hoe in his hand. The men exchange knowing glances. Words are not said, or needed. Everything is communicated in their smiles as PASTOR JIM starts working alongside.

EXT. THE FIELD OF DIRT - LATER THAT DAY

The sun has taken its toll. The three men are sweating profusely from their toil and all but worn out. PASTOR JIM is the first one to concede.

PASTOR JIM

I mean to tell you if I try and go on any further you might as well dig a hole right here and put me in it. What kind of workhorses are you two anyway?

DONNIE

We're mmen, Pastor Jim.

PATOR JIM

That you are, that you truly are. But there is a time and place for everything and right now I feel it's time to soak my old bones in a warm tub. There's always tomorrow.

RUFUS

I guess that's good enough for today, but we'll be back tomorrow morning.

PASTOR JIM

Come to breakfast first thing.

RUFUS

Thank you, wouldn't miss it for anything.

CUT TO:

EXT. MAIN STREET OF TOWN - EVENING

RUFUS and DONNIE stroll down the main street of town looking as good as they ever have. They are washed and shaved. RUFUS is sporting a Stetson cowboy hat as an accessory to his wardrobe. The new clothes fit the confidence they have that things are looking up.

DONNIE

Rufus? Ddo you like PPastor Jim?

RUFUS

I like him just fine I guess.

DONNIE

Me too. I-I like him aalot. Do you think he'll let us sstay?

RUFUS

Don't see why not. We earned our keep didn't we?

DONNIE

Yeah, we did...We eearned our keep. HHe called us wworkhorses. Ya Ya gotta keep your wworkhorses.

RUFUS

That's right...and horses work up a powerful thirst. A thirst that's gotta be quenched.

RUFUS has been eyeing the town's bar all during the conversation. He has now arrived at the front door and feels he is deserving of its call. He opens the door and enters with DONNIE in tow.

CUT TO:

INT. TOWN BAR - LATE IN THE NIGHT

The bar is alive with laughter and song. It is karaoke night and the two friends have been enjoying the entertainment. They are in no pain as is evidenced by the shot glasses and empty beer bottles which surround them. On stage two mildly attractive forty year old women, SUSAN and SANDRA are performing a song together to the delight of the patrons. They are belting out "I've Got Friends In Low Places." The song fits in just right with this type of clientele. Once they have finished the song SUSAN playfully swipes the hat off RUFUS' head and starts to fan herself.

SUSAN

Damn! Did somebody turn up the heat in here or what?

RUFUS

You are just naturally hot.

SUSAN

(Amused)

And you are a natural smoothie. My name is Susan, Susan Woods.

RUFUS

I'm Rufus...this is Donnie.

RUFUS extends his hand to shake but SUSAN has a better idea. She takes his hand and wraps it around her waist, takes a mother may I step forward and plants a long wet one on his lips.

SUSAN

Pleased to make your acquaintance Rufus.

She looks around to find her friend SANDRA flirting with a number of men at the bar. SUSAN calls to her.

SUSAN (CONT)

Sandra, come over here and meet my new best friends Rufus and Donnie.

Like a bee bouncing from one flower to the next SANDRA checks out her new target.

SANDRA

Hello fellas, I haven't seen you here before but I like what I see.

SUSAN

They were just about to invite us for a drink...weren't you boys?

SANDRA

Well it would be downright unlady like to refuse.

RUFUS begins to motion to the bartender but SUSAN has beaten him to the punch. She takes RUFUS' whiskey bottle and fills the six shot glasses on his table. She and SANDRA immediately down two of them.

SANDRA (CONT)

So where are you boys from?

RUFUS

East of here.

SUSAN

So you're heading west. How far? Don't tell me...let me guess...Hollywood. Any man as gorgeous as you gotta be heading for the big screen.

SANDY

I think you're dead on Susan. Definitely leading man material. Are you an actor Rufus?

RUFUS

Can't say I haven't had occasion to do some acting.

The girls down another shot.

SUSAN

I knew it; you've got that animal magnetism quality.

SANDRA

(To DONNIE)

What about you hun? You an actor too?

DONNIE

N-No, I aint no aactor.

RUFUS

Donnie does some stutterin...no good for acting. He's more the producer type.

DONNIE

Yeah, yyeah, I-I got an uncle in HAHollywood whose a bbig time producer.

RUFUS

You never told me you had a big time producer uncle.

DONNIE

I didn't know you wwas gonna bbe an actor. I-I do . I really do.

The girls down the last of the six shots.

SANDRA

Ooooh, we're in the midst of Hollywood royalty..

(To DONNIE)

...Ya know I've got some special talents. If I show them to you, do you think you might put me in one of your movies?

DONNIE

YYes.

SANDRA

All right then, let me down a few more drinks and I'll show you everything.

SANDRA grabs the whiskey bottle and refills the six shot glasses, taking it to the last drop.

SANDRA (CONT)

We're gonna need another bottle.

She shakes the empty bottle at the barkeeper who nods in response.

SUSAN

(To RUFUS)

I'm cooling off now. Time to heat up the engine again. How about dancing with me lover?

SUSAN takes RUFUS' hand and leads him to the dance floor. The song is slow and the dancing sexy. The heat between them is palpable. One soft kiss is followed by a crescendo of passionate kisses.

CUT TO:

INT. THE CHURCH SHACK - AN HOUR LATER

The foursome stumbles through the door with bottles in hand. They are tightly woven around each other and barely make their way to their respective beds. RUFUS and SUSAN can't rip the clothes off each other fast enough. SANDRA has stripped and is under the covers of DONNIE'S bed. She motions for DONNIE to join her. Confused and frightened he lays down next to her fully clothed. In the other bed RUFUS and SUSAN are going at it full throttle.

SANDRA

What's the matter honey? Don't you like girls?

RUFUS

He's just the shy variety...a bit inexperienced.

SANDRA

How inexperienced?

(To DONNIE)

You ever had a girl before hun?

DONNIE is petrified.

SANDRA (CONT)

You ever feel a girl before?

She takes his hand to her breast.

SANDRA (CONT)

You ever been felt by a girl
before?

DONNIE'S expression indicates she is feeling him, trying to get an arousal, a reaction, a something. She finally quits in frustration.

SANDRA (CONT)

Hey, my toy's not working.

SUSAN

Well come on over here girl. This
one's got plenty of life yet.

SANDRA doesn't have to be asked twice and deserts DONNIE, bolting for the action bed.

CUT TO:

INT. PASTOR JIM'S KITCHEN - THE NEXT MORNING

There are four places set at the kitchen table. MARTHA sets the last of the morning breakfast on the table as PASTOR JIM rechecks his watch.

MARTHA

Breakfast is going to get cold.

PASTOR JIM

I'm sure they remember...Maybe I'll
go over and see what's holding
them up.

CUT TO:

INT. THE CHURCH SHACK - A FEW MINUTES LATER

Clothes are scattered everywhere. Several bottles of alcohol attest to the notion of a wild night. RUFUS is in bed sandwiched between the two naked ladies while DONNIE is on his bed still fully clothed.

There is a soft tap on the door followed by a louder more persistent knock. The door cracks slowly open and PASTOR JIM peers in. He finds the spectacle he was hoping against. RUFUS squints through his bloodshot eyes to see PASTOR JIM'S disappointed face. RUFUS is paralyzed to respond and instead simply falls back to unconsciousness.

CUT TO:

INT. PASTOR JIM'S HOME - A FEW HOURS LATER

There is a knock at the door. PASTOR JIM answers it to find a contrite RUFUS holding the neatly folded new clothes and hat PASTOR JIM had given them.

RUFUS

These belong to you. I'm sorry I let you down. I guess I'm just a sinner.

PASTOR JIM

We are all sinners Rufus.

RUFUS

Still, you treated us real good...gave us a chance. I think it's best if we move on.

PASTOR JIM

I understand. I hope in your travels you choose the right road.

RUFUS

Thanks for the compass. It may come in handy someday.

RUFUS turns to leave. PASTOR JIM extends his hand to him. RUFUS turns back to take it. The two men realize they will never again cross paths. PASTOR JIM wistfully watches RUFUS fade from sight. He is joined by MARTHA who comforts him.

MARTHA

All you can do is to plant the seed. It's up to the spirit to make it grow.

PASTOR JIM

I know, but it's hard sometimes not knowing if there will be any fruit from your labor. I guess that's what trusting in the Lord is all about.

CUT TO:

INT. SUSAN'S VAN - SHORTLY THEREAFTER

The foursome has piled into SUSAN'S older modeled van. They are all in recovery mode from the previous night.

SUSAN

All right everybody, where to?

RUFUS

Me and Donnie are leaving town.

SUSAN

What do ya mean? We just buddied up.

SANDRA

Yeah, we're just getting to know each other. Where are you going? Hollywood?

DONNIE

Yeah, Hollyw-wood...ssee my uncle.

SANDRA

Well I want to go to Hollywood. You promised to put me in a movie, remember?

SUSAN

Sure, we'll go to Hollywood with you. There's nothing to do in this boring town.

(To RUFUS)

You want Susan to chauffeur your cute ass to Hollywood?...Mister big time movie star?

RUFUS

Hell yeah, let's go, I'm ready to
star in a film.

There is unanimous enthusiasm for the road trip as the van
begins its journey.

CUT TO:

INT. SUSAN'S VAN - EVENING

SUSAN is driving the van while the others sleep. She is
doing her best to remain alert but is starting to lose the
battle. She reaches over and shakes the slumbering RUFUS.

SUSAN

Wake up lover.

RUFUS groggily comes to life. His throat is parched.

RUFUS

Where are we? I need a drink.

SUSAN

I don't know. I've been driving my
ass off all day. We need to get a
room and some food.

RUFUS

Pull off the first town you see.

She spots a hotel with a restaurant nearby and parks the
van in the lot.

SUSAN

Okay everybody get up, we're here.

SANDRA

Where?

SUSAN

Middle of nowhere.

SANDRA

You're right, I recognize it.

SUSAN

You boys get us a room. I gotta wee real bad. We'll meet you in the restaurant.

The two ladies make a hurried exit towards the restaurant.

RUFUS

(To DONNIE)

How much money you got left?

DONNIE

(Counting it out)

Three dollars and ssixty five, no seventy five ccents.

RUFUS

That's just great. I got sixteen bucks left to my name. We got no shot at getting a room.

DONNIE

W-What are we ggonna do?

RUFUS

She's got some blankets in the back. We'll just sleep in the van.....I feel like shit. I need something to drink.

RUFUS eyes a nearby liquor store and exits the van to make a beeline for it as DONNIE follows.

CUT TO:

INT. SUSAN'S VAN - A COUPLE HOURS LATER

RUFUS and DONNIE are laid back in the van. They have gone through their money and the booze it has bought them. They are in a stupor and enjoying it. SUSAN and SANDRA slide open the door to discover them.

SUSAN

Holy mother of shit! What do you two think you're doing?

RUFUS

Resting.

SUSAN

Resting? From what? Sleeping off a hangover all day? Now it looks like you're going to have another one tomorrow. Did you get us a room?

RUFUS

We thought it might be more fun to sleep right here in the van.

SUSAN

Are you shittin me? There's no shower in this van. You gotta get us a room.

RUFUS

Can't.

DONNIE

We We aint got nno mmore money.

SANDRA

They went and spent their last stinkin dollar on booze, and now expect us to sleep in the van.

RUFUS

It aint no big deal. We can crawl under the blanket and snuggle.

SUSAN

Snuggle my ass! You didn't pay for gas... You made us buy our own dinner...and now you want us to spend the night with you two assholes that smell like shit. What happened to the cool guys with the fancy clothes?

DONNIE

We ddonated them to the cchurch.

SUSAN

Listen, I don't know what you've got planned, but you'd better come up with something. I'm no money tree ya know. We're down to dollars too.

RUFUS

(Irritated)

You want a room? You want a room? I'll get you a room. Come with me.

He grabs her arm and marches her towards the nearest bar.

RUFUS

Just keep your mouth shut and your tits out.

CUT TO:

INT. TOWN BAR - A SHORT TIME LATER

RUFUS ushers SUSAN through the door and into the bar. It is a dark foreboding hole, dimly lit by several neon advertising lights. RUFUS parks her at the end of the bar. She is noticeably the only female in the place and on display. Crusty looking degenerates size her up. There is only one man in his early twenties who looks reasonably decent. RUFUS goes to him and speaks in a hushed tone.

RUFUS

Hey stud, you lookin to finish the night with a happy ending?

STUD

Man, you gotta get some younger stock. She's old enough to be my mother.

RUFUS surveys the possible clients and slides over to the next least disgusting choice.

RUFUS

Buddy, I don't see no other female prospects in here.....

SECOND DEGENERATE

What are you asking?

RUFUS

Twenty for me, twenty for her plus
a room.

SECOND DEGENERATE

I'll give you five bucks each and
take her to the back of my car.

RUFUS

I wouldn't let you sniff her for
five bucks.

RUFUS is reaching the bottom of the barrel. He makes his way to a mentally impaired indigent in his late seventies. Meanwhile SUSAN has caught on to RUFUS' scheme that she is being pimped out. She doesn't know whether to be more furious at RUFUS or at the thought that she is being rejected by these scums.

RUFUS

(To the OLD MAN)

When's the last time you had a
piece of ass like that?

The OLD MAN starts to visibly drool and froth at the mouth.

RUFUS (CONT)

I can make it happen. Would you
like that?

The spark of a snicker flames into a fit of uncontrollable laughter from the crazed OLD MAN. Soon everyone in the bar has joined in on the joke. Another PATRON yells out.

PATRON

He had ball cancer. He aint got
none left!

RUFUS

What did I walk into? A bar full
of fruit flies?

The raucous laughter immediately stops and menacing looks are accompanied by several men posturing into an intimidating formation.

RUFUS

Sorry, sorry, just got a bit frustrated. Have a nice evening gentlemen.

He grabs SUSAN and makes for a rapid exit.

CUT TO:

EXT. OUTSIDE THE BAR - A BEAT LATER

SUSAN rips her arm from RUFUS' clutch. She is mortified and seething as she marches back to the van. She arrives to find SANDRA sitting on the ground outside the van.

SUSAN

What are you doing sitting out here? Why aren't you inside the van?

SANDRA arises and slides open the van door. Inside is DONNIE who has vomited over most everything including himself. SUSAN loses it. She screams and kicks at DONNIE.

SUSAN

You fucking son-of-a-bitch! Get your fucking ass out of my van you piece of fucking rat shit!

She disgustedly climbs into the van in order to lay into DONNIE. She kicks at him with the heel of her shoes, rolling him out onto the asphalt.

SUSAN

You fucking losers! I hope you drown in your puke you fucking bums!...Get in the van Sandra.

SANDRA steps gingerly into the van, trying to find an unscathed spot. She is forced to hold her head out the window to avoid the smell. SUSAN revs the engine and slams it into gear, leaving RUFUS and DONNIE sitting side by side in the lot oblivious to the tirade.

RUFUS

Was it something you ate?

DONNIE

I aint had nnothin to eat.

RUFUS

I know. Let's try and fix that.

The two weave their way to the back of the restaurant where a dinner invitation waits in the form of a dumpster.

RUFUS

Give me a boost.

DONNIE'S over enthusiastic boost hurls RUFUS head over heels into the dumpster. He rights himself and start to rummage through the garbage.

DONNIE

FFind anything?

RUFUS

I can't see shit...Bunch of wilted lettuce...some tomato crap...here, take these.

RUFUS hands DONNIE six hardened bread rolls. While in the process, the manger exits a rear door and spots them.

MANAGER

Hey! Get outta there you bums.

RUFUS

Take it easy. We aint takin nothing but garbage.

MANAGER

Yeah, well it's my garbage. Hit the road.

RUFUS

Thanks for caring man.

RUFUS hops out of the dumpster and the two walk away like scalded dogs with their spoil, six rock hard rolls.

DONNIE

These rrolls are stale.

RUFUS

Your stomach won't know the
difference.

DONNIE

What are we gonna do nnow Rufus?

In the background we hear the sound of a TRAIN WHISTLE.
RUFUS strains to see a silhouette of train boxcars slowly
moving in the distance. Immediately following the TRAIN
WHISTLE we hear a CLAP of thunder.

RUFUS

Same as before, we're goin to
Hollywood so your uncle can make
me a star...c'mon.

RUFUS and DONNIE stuff the rolls into their pockets and
begin their awkward jog towards the train. The skies open
up and a downpour begins. They arrive at the tracks and
study the line of boxcars going by.

RUFUS

First car with an open door we
jump in...Got it?...There!

They begin to run parallel with the open car. RUFUS
successfully climbs into the car but a struggling DONNIE
cannot keep up. RUFUS watches as DONNIE falls down the
embankment and into the mud.

DONNIE

Rufus!

RUFUS

Donnie get up and run!

DONNIE

Rufus!

The distance between them becomes increasingly greater.
RUFUS realizes DONNIE has no chance to catch up and must
make a decision. He paces in and out of the car and with
one determined thrust, leaps out to hit hard and rolls into
a puddle of mud. DONNIE jogs up to find his hero looking
the same as himself.

DONNIE

DDid you ffall out?

After a moment of incredulous silence RUFUS spots another open car.

RUFUS

There! Now run your ass off!

DONNIE makes a flying leap into the car but is stalled half in and half out. RUFUS is running alongside. His entry is blocked by DONNIE'S protruding derriere.

RUFUS

Get you ass up there! I can't run forever.

DONNIE

I'm stuck.

RUFUS pushes and shoves DONNIE'S ass without result.

RUFUS

Dammit Donnie! Keep climbing!

DONNIE puffs and struggles but makes scant progress. RUFUS sees a plank of wood and grabs it. He catches back up to DONNIE and starts wailing on his rear. The strategy works. DONNIE hastens his climb. He is followed by an irate RUFUS.

RUFUS

My God damn grandmother can move faster than you and she's got a broken hip.

DONNIE

I-I'm ssorry Rufus. Don't be mmad at me.

RUFUS

What else am I suppose to be?

DONNIE

My ffriend.

From the pitch black of the car's corner the threatening GROWL of an animal begins to grow. With teeth bared a dog steps out of the shadows raising his piercing snarl. RUFUS and DONNIE are frozen. A VOICE comes from the abyss.

TRAIN BUM

Leave em alone Pest.

The dog, PEST, immediately changes his demeanor. He is a mid sized mutt, unkempt and under fed. The flash of an occasional lightning bolt illuminates the corner hideout where the bum is curled up. He matches the description of his dog. He carries with him a bad cough and a whiskey bottle.

TRAIN BUM (CONT)

You fellas don't mind Pest. He only does that when he's scared.

RUFUS

He wasn't the only one scared.

DONNIE

Come here Pest.

The dog makes immediate friends with DONNIE, licking his face and eating up DONNIE'S attention.

TRAIN BUM

Don't never see him warm up to someone so fast. Pest is a good judge of character...Where you boys headin?

DONNIE

H-Hollywood. My uncle is gonna make RRufus a movie star.

TRAIN BUM

Hollywood huh...land of broken dreams. I've been there...no easier bein a bum there than anywhere else.

RUFUS

We aint bums.

TRAIN BUM

No? You got no home, no car, no cash for a ticket. You look like hell and ya smell worse...You're part of the club.

He lets out a cough which resonates throughout the boxcar.

RUFUS

You sick or somethin?

TRAIN BUM

Picked up a bug... I'm tryin to kill it with my medicine.

He gleefully displays his whiskey bottle and downs a dose.

RUFUS

Maybe it's the medicine what's killin ya.

TRAIN BUM

Join me in a swig of death?

Rufus takes the bottles and swallows a large gulp. He then hands it to DONNIE who does the same and hands it back to the TRAIN BUM.

TRAIN BUM

Maybe it is my turn to die. When life cripples you, and people think you're worthless, or even worse...don't think of you at all...you got no need to be alive...you're just takin up space. Just gotta hope there's somethin better waitin for you on the other side...but I don't like my chances. I fucked up real bad.

RUFUS

That's not what Pastor Jim said.

TRAIN BUM

Who?

RUFUS

A friend of ours...knows all about that God stuff. He said it makes no difference how bad you fucked up. If you ask, it's all forgiven...anytime, anywhere.

TRAIN BUM

You believe that?

RUFUS

(Thoughtfully)

Can't say I do, but then I'm not the one ready to die.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. THE BOXCAR - THE NEXT MORNING

The rain has passed and it is a cloudless sun filled morning. RUFUS is asleep. The TRAIN BUM also appears to be sleeping. DONNIE is awake. He is watching PEST lick the face of the TRAIN BUM. There is no response from him, not even a breath. DONNIE crawls over and shakes RUFUS.

DONNIE

Rufus? Rufus?

RUFUS

(Still sleeping)

What?

DONNIE

PPest is worried. The old mman...he aint mmovin.

RUFUS

(With closed eyes)

He's passed out.

DONNIE

He aint bbreathed in the last tten minutes.

This gets RUFUS to open his eyes. He crawls over to the TRAIN BUM to examine him more closely. After staring intently at him he checks his pulse, then heartbeat. He pries open one of the TRAIN BUM'S eyes.

RUFUS

Son-of-a bitch is dead. I guess he
won't be needin this no more.

Rufus takes the bottle of whiskey from his clutch.

RUFUS (CONT)

What else you got for us old man?

He starts to rummage through the TRAIN BUM'S pockets and
discovers thirty eight cents in change, a candy bar, four
cigarettes, and a lighter.

RUFUS (CONT)

Jackpot, huh?

DONNIE

It ddon't seem right. SStealin
from a ddead man.

RUFUS

We aint stealin, we're inheritin.
We're the closest thing he's got
to kin.

DONNIE

We gonna give him a ffuneral?

RUFUS

I aint gonna do no digging if
that's what you're asking.

DONNIE

No, I-I jus thought a ffew words.

They stand solemnly over the body.

RUFUS

God, if you're listenin, you got
another customer comin. The old
man got pretty beat up by this
world. I hope that you treat him
more kind. I hope you treat us all
more kind. Amen

DONNIE

What do wwe do now?

RUFUS

We get the hell out of here before
someone accuses us of killing him...

(Looking out the door)

...There's a big town over there. I
think we can jump.

DONNIE

CCan't we wait til the ttrain
stops?

RUFUS

Get over here and look how slow
the train's goin.

DONNIE looks out the door at which time RUFUS shoves him. A
moment later RUFUS leaps out. A beat later PEST jumps out
and follows them.

DONNIE

Ow, ow my knee.

DONNIE rolls in pain as RUFUS approaches him.

RUFUS

What did you do?

DONNIE

MMy knee, I hhurt my knee.

RUFUS

What do you expect me to do about
it? I can't carry you.

PEST comes trotting up and licks DONNIE'S face.

DONNIE

Hey Pest, aw good boy Pest.

RUFUS

Great, just what I need, another
mouth to feed...get up.

RUFUS helps DONNIE to his feet and provides himself as a
crutch for DONNIE to lean on as they head towards the town.

CUT TO:

EXT. A BUSY STREET IN TOWN - DAY

Several people walk up and down the street, each consumed by their own world. Among them are RUFUS, DONNIE, and PEST. DONNIE has a noticeable limp. RUFUS still carries the TRAIN BUM'S bottle of whiskey in one hand.

DONNIE

Can I sit down awhile Rufus?

RUFUS

Yeah, sure.

He puts DONNIE down on the street, against a building.

DONNIE

I'm sure am hungry.

RUFUS

Here, eat this.

He hands DONNIE the candy bar which DONNIE eats half of but then gives half to PEST.

RUFUS

You went and gave that dog our food?

DONNIE

Pest is hungry too.

RUFUS

Yeah yeah, everybody's hungry. The whole world is hungry.

RUFUS stops a man who is walking down the street.

RUFUS (CONT)

Excuse me sir. Could you help out my friend and me with a little change so we can buy some food?

FIRST MAN

(He eyes the whiskey)

Sorry, I don't think so.

RUFUS

Anything would help.

FIRST MAN

Help you what?...Buy another
bottle?

He walks on as RUFUS turns to a SECOND MAN.

RUFUS

Sir, could you please help us get
something to eat?

SECOND MAN

Get a job.

The SECOND MAN coldly brushes RUFUS aside and continues on. A third lady avoids eye contact with RUFUS as he looks to approach her. She quickens her walk to escape. RUFUS realizes the futility of his mission. He looks down at DONNIE playing with PEST.

RUFUS

Will you be okay here by yourself
for a little while?

DONNIE

Sure. I-I got Pest. W-Where ya
goin?

RUFUS

Shoppin.

CUT TO:

INT. A SUPERMARKET - AWHILE LATER

RUFUS enters and grabs a shopping cart. His first destination is the beer aisle from which he secures two six packs and places them in his cart. From there he prowls the aisles like a tiger looking for prey. He sees a rather homely, overweight woman, probably in her fifties who he thinks would be susceptible to his advance. She is in the meat section pondering her options when he approaches.

RUFUS

(To the woman)

Do you eat meat often?

WOMAN

Only when I get the urge.

RUFUS

And how often do you get the urge?

WOMAN

Two or three times a week.

RUFUS

Is two or three times a week
enough to satisfy a gorgeous red
blooded American woman?

She begins to realize where this conversation is headed.

WOMAN

That depends upon the quality of
the meat.

RUFUS

I deliver nothing but prime.
Satisfaction guaranteed.

A few yards away a middle age man has picked up on the
conversation.

WOMAN

I may be interested. Do you
deliver?

RUFUS

For a price.

WOMAN

A price?

RUFUS

For fifty bucks I'll send a
shockwave through you that will
curl your toes.

WOMAN

(Incredulous)

You want ME to pay YOU? Asshole,
I'd be doing you a mercy fuck.

(To a nearby friend)

Hey Carla, come check this out.

Another female shopper wheels her cart over.

WOMAN (CONT)

This prick has got the nerve to
ask me for money to bang him.

The two women both break out in laughter. RUFUS is getting
more embarrassed by the second.

CARLA

Does he want you to pay him to
give him a bath too?

The decibel of laughter increases and draws more attention.

WOMAN

(Yelling out)

Hey, anyone in here desperate to
get laid?! This loser is offering
his prick for rent...cheap!

RUFUS has had all the humiliation he can stand. He snatches
the two six packs of beer and bolts for the exit.

CASHIER

Sir! Sir! You haven't paid for
that.

CUT TO:

EXT. OUTSIDE THE SUPERMARKET - A MOMENT LATER

A bag boy makes a short and futile attempt to flag down the
fleeing RUFUS. The man in the store who had been watching
the whole scenario passes the returning bag boy. He moves
at a quick pace, determined not to lose sight of RUFUS.

CUT TO:

EXT. A BUSY STREET IN TOWN - A WHILE LATER

DONNIE and PEST have a small gathering of onlookers
laughing and tossing coins to DONNIE as RUFUS approaches.
He is finishing off the last beer in one of the six packs
and is mystified by the crowd surrounding DONNIE. He pushes
his way through the gathering.

RUFUS

(To DONNIE)

What's all this?

DONNIE

H-Hi Rufus. Me and P Pest, we're putting on a show. For a quarter I-I let the people shoot him.

RUFUS

Shoot him?

DONNIE

Yeah, look.

DONNIE forms his fingers into a gun and points it at PEST

DONNIE

Bang!

PEST falls down and rolls over on his back to play dead. The people watching laugh and throw coins.

RUFUS

A circus act?...Is that what we've become? Damn players in a freak show?

DONNIE

Pest was just tryin to earn his keep.

RUFUS

Well he's not. He's just a worthless mangy house of fleas.

DONNIE

He he's my friend.

RUFUS

If you were really his friend you'd just put him out of his misery...before he starves to death. That's what real friends do. They keep their friends from getting hurt...they get em what they need...they steal God damn beer for them...Here, drink one.

RUFUS rips off a beer for himself and then drops the six pack on DONNIE'S lap.

DONNIE

Did you ggo shoppin for some
ffood?

RUFUS

Just drink your damn beer.

The man who had been following RUFUS from the grocery store methodically approaches the two drinking beer. He gives off an unmistakable signal of sleaze.

SLEAZE

Hello boys, enjoying your beers?

RUFUS

Yeah.

SLEAZE

I saw you steel them from the
grocery store.

RUFUS

What are you, the beer Nazi?

SLEAZE

(Chuckling)

No, no, I couldn't care less about
that...But I do know how you could
earn money for more...a lot more.

RUFUS

I'm listening.

SLEAZE

Those women in the store, they
didn't appreciate what you had to
offer. I, on the other hand, am a
man who understands the value of
such a service.

There is an uneasy silence as RUFUS tries to decipher what the man's intentions are.

RUFUS

Who do you want the service for?

SLEAZE

Why me of course...I'll pay you well.

RUFUS is stunned. At the same time he finds himself actually torn by the offer. He finally snaps back.

RUFUS

Service yourself sleaze.

SLEEZE

What about your friend?

DONNIE

Will you bbuy us ssome food?

SLEAZE

Sure, sure, absolutely. All you can eat.

DONNIE

Rufus, we ggotta eat. I-I'll do anything sso you can eat. What ddo I gotta do?

RUFUS

He wants to use you like he would a woman.

DONNIE reflects on what that means. He is sick and scared but resolute.

DONNIE

Will he hhurt me? DDon't let him hhurt me.

SLEAZE

No, no, not at all. I'm real slow...gentle. I like to savor each moment. You'll have fun, I promise.

RUFUS

Tell him to go fuck himself Donnie. We'll get by.

DONNIE

I ddon't want to bbe worthless to
you Rufus.

RUFUS

Donnie, you aint worthless. Don't
be doin this for my sake.

DONNIE

Watch Pest for me.

DONNIE limps off with the SLEAZE around the corner and down a dark alley to a secluded area. RUFUS and PEST follow from a distance and stop at the entrance of the alley. They are just close enough to keep an eye on things without being noticed. We hear a zipper UNZIP. DONNIE is slowly coaxed to his knees. Beads of sweat form on his tortured brow.

Outside the alley RUFUS is struggling to cope with the same emotions DONNIE is suffering. He walks away from the alley only to be drawn back time and time again. After a few minutes RUFUS hears the muffled sound of DONNIE crying between breaths. The cry intensifies to painful wails. PEST is beside himself, barking and snarling. RUFUS can no longer withstand the anguish. He sprints to the end of the alley to find DONNIE bent over a barrel with his pants and underwear down around his ankles. The SLEEZE is in full ecstasy. RUFUS grabs a metal pipe and starts to beat the life out of the SLEAZE who wilts to the ground. RUFUS continues to pummel him mercilessly far after there is no movement. He pulls DONNIE to his feet and helps him dress.

RUFUS

I told you not to do this! I told
you! When are you going to listen
to me? Now look what's happened.

RUFUS rifles through the man's pockets and cleans him out of a considerable amount of cash.

RUFUS

Can you run on that knee?

DONNIE

(Through the tears)

Yeah.

RUFUS

Then let's get out of here.

CUT TO:

INT. A BUS TERMINAL - LATER THAT DAY

RUFUS, DONNIE, and PEST enter a Greyhound bus terminal. RUFUS leaves the others a few yards behind him as he approaches a ticket window. He withdraws a stack of bills from his pocket and lays them down in front of the teller.

RUFUS

When's your next bus to Hollywood?

TELLER

Hollywood, California...We've got one leaving in forty five minutes.

RUFUS

All right. Give me two tickets.

The teller looks beyond RUFUS at DONNIE and PEST.

TELLER

No dogs on the bus.

RUFUS

What if I buy a ticket for him?

TELLER

No dogs on the bus.

RUFUS

How about if we put him in with the luggage?

TELLER

I don't make the rules. No dogs on the bus.

RUFUS

Your whole God damn company is named after a dog and you're telling me I can't put one on the bus?

TELLER

Do you want the two tickets or
not?

RUFUS grabs the tickets in disgust and goes back to DONNIE.

RUFUS

They won't let Pest on the bus.

DONNIE

B-But he's gotta ccome along. He's
my friend. If I leave him hhe'll
starve for sure.

RUFUS

What do you want me to do? I can't
buy the whole damn bus. Sometimes
friends...they just gotta say
goodbye...just gotta be. I'm gonna
be getting on that bus to
Hollywood. You can say goodbye to
that dog or you can say goodbye to
me.

DONNIE is in agony, but knows the choice he must make. He leads PEST out of the terminal to a secluded spot by a dumpster. RUFUS follows, out of sight. He watches as DONNIE says goodbye to PEST. DONNIE sits on the ground holding PEST'S face close to his own. As he speaks, tears stream down his face. PEST lovingly licks them away.

DONNIE

I-I never did have many ffriends.
Now I gotta ssay goodbye to you
too. Rufus, he ssays your
wworthless. I don't tthink that...
but if people ddo, they're gonna
ttreat you bad...hhurt you. I-I
don't want you should be hurt like
tthat.

He lowers the dog to his lap and clamps his powerful hands around the neck of the animal. DONNIE tries to escape the reality of the moment with a blank heavenly stare. Slowly he squeezes the life out of PEST who mildly thrashes and whines in objection. DONNIE continues his apology after PEST is gone.

DONNIE (CONT)

I-I'm your friend...I'm looking out
ffor you. No one will eever bbe
bad to you again...not nnever.
That's wwhat ffriends do.

DONNIE places the dog on the ground and tenderly covers him
with newspaper.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. THE BUS TERMINAL - MOMENTS LATER

RUFUS is back in the terminal after having watched DONNIE'S
emotional goodbye. DONNIE enters and joins RUFUS. Their
eyes meet. No words are exchanged or needed. RUFUS
empathizes with his friend's sorrow and holds him. They
then proceed to board the bus.

CUT TO:

INT. A HOLLYWOOD HOME - NIGHT

A small group of teens are strung out from a night's worth
of partying. Three girls and two boys, ZACH and MIKE are on
the floor, engaged in a drinking game with an empty bottle
of tequila and shot glasses surrounding them.

GIRL ONE

C'mon Ryan, it's your turn.

RYAN enters from the kitchen with two bottles of tequila.
He is charismatic, slick, and always in charge.

RYAN

I've got the ammunition...

The partiers approve.

RYAN (CONT)

...What am I? Body part or verb?

GIRL TWO

You're the verb, I'm the body
part.

RYAN

Okay, okay.

He reaches into a bowl and plucks out a piece of paper which he reads aloud.

RYAN (CONT)

Lick!

The group's anticipation rises as GIRL TWO pulls out a piece of paper from a second bowl and reads.

GIRL TWO

My knee.

Disappointment resonates from the onlookers. RYAN rolls over to GIRL TWO, sticks out his tongue, and starts to lick her knee. He steadily makes his way up her thigh, higher and higher up her skirt. GIRL TWO is laughing and loving it but playfully pushes him away.

GIRL TWO

My knee, my knee, that's not my knee.

RYAN

Sorry, my tongue slipped.

GIRL TWO

Yeah, right. Take a shot.

RYAN pours himself a shot of tequila and downs it.

RYAN

Okay, who's next?

ZACH

Me and Jill.

JILL has already passed out on the floor and does not respond to her friend's attempts to revive her.

MIKE

She's out cold.

RYAN

That's all right. She still plays.

(To ZACH)

Pick your verb.

ZACH reaches into the bowl and pulls out a piece of paper.

ZACH

Spank!

Again the anticipation grows. RYAN shakes the bowl over JILL'S comatose face.

RYAN

Jilly, oh Jilly...Time to choose a body part Jilly.

RYAN takes JILL'S hand and places it in the bowl. He then looks through the choices and places one in her hand.

RYAN (CONT)

What's this? Which one did you choose? It says booty!

The group rolls JILL over and pulls up her skirt.

RYAN (CONT)

Wait a minute. I gotta have this one for the records.

He leaves but soon returns with his video camera in hand.

RYAN (CONT)

Let's see that booty!

RYAN begins filming as the girls pull JILL'S panties down. ZACH performs his part and starts to spank JILL'S bottom.

RYAN (CONT)

Hey, didn't JILL want to be an actress someday? Let's start her on a career right now...as a porn star...strip her.

RYAN takes delight in filming the defenseless girl as she is stripped of her clothing.

CUT TO:

EXT. SCHOOLYARD - DAY

RYAN strolls through the schoolyard on his way to class. He is carrying a few books with him. He wears a pair of dark sunglasses which reflect his cocky arrogant style. Several guys file by giving him the thumbs up and high fives with accompanying comments: "very nice", "when's the sequel?", and "give that man an Oscar". ZACH runs up to RYAN stoked.

ZACH

Owww...The director man...Jill is
pissed as hell that you posted her
"episode" on the internet

They see JILL in the distance fending off crude gestures and comments from other students. She sees RYAN and flips him off.

RYAN

Yeah, well she got her fifteen
minutes of fame. Now she's got to
pay for it.

RYAN and ZACH enter a classroom and take their seats. The bell rings and the teacher rises from his desk.

TEACHER

We are going to begin a project
which will focus our attention on
various aspects of life in
America. I want you to break up
into groups of three and plan for
the filming, directing, and
editing of a fifteen minute short
film. The subject matter will be
of your choosing.

This is RYAN'S dream project. He looks around to ZACH and MIKE to garner their support.

CUT TO:

INT. ONBOARD THE BUS - DAY

RUFUS and DONNIE stare out the window of the bus at the sights and sounds of Hollywood.

ANGLE: The famous Hollywood sign.

ANGLE: Grauman's Chinese theatre.

ANGLE: The Hollywood walk of fame.

ANGLE: Street acts

CUT TO:

EXT. THE STREETS OF HOLLYWOOD - DAY

RUFUS and DONNIE exit the bus terminal eager to explore the famed tinsel town.

RUFUS

Hollywierd. Ya know, I think we might have found a home here.

DONNIE

YYou think so Rufus? You think we'll be sstayin here?

RUFUS

Hell yeah. After my first acting role I'll buy us a million dollar home in the hills. Would you like that Donnie?

DONNIE

I-I'd like that a whole lot.

RUFUS

All right then, let's find your uncle. What's the name of the company he works for again?

DONNIE

P-Primetime pproductions.
HHollywood Califfornia. Producer
KKenneth Walker.

A tux rental shop attracts RUFUS' attention. He studies the finely dressed mannequins in the window.

RUFUS

We can't go in these rags. We gotta dress the part. Hollywood is all image... C'mon.

CUT TO:

EXT. THE STREETS OF HOLLYWOOD - A LITTLE WHILE LATER

RUFUS and DONNIE emerge from the shop overdressed for most any occasion. RUFUS counts the remaining money.

DONNIE

How much mmoney we ggot left?

RUFUS

About enough for a taxi ride and a bottle.

He hails a taxi then takes the money he had planned for a bottle and gives it to a homeless man holding a sign.

HOMELESS MAN

God bless you man.

RUFUS

If he don't already hate me.

RUFUS and DONNIE get into the cab and it drives off.

CUT TO:

INT. PRIMETIME PRODUCTIONS - DAY

A congenial receptionist sits behind an expansive semi-circled desk just beyond the glass door entrance. She is finishing a phone call as RUFUS and DONNIE approach.

RECEPTIONIST

Good afternoon, may I help you?

RUFUS

Yes, we'd like to see Mister...

DONNIE

K-Kenneth Walker. Producer Kenneth Wwalker.

RUFUS

Do you have an appointment?

DONNIE

He's my uncle. My mother's
brother.

RUFUS

No, we don't. It's a family
surprise.

RECEPTIONIST

All right, let me check.

Her brow furrows as she works with her computer.

RECEPTIONIST

That name is spelled W-a-l-k-e-r?

DONNIE

Yes, That's right.

RECEPTIONIST

Hmm, I don't see any executives in
our building with that name.

DONNIE

Big movie producer, Kenneth
Walker.

RECEPTIONIST

Right. Let me check our full
employment listing.

She rifles through more computer files.

RECEPTIONIST (CONT)

Here we go, Ken Walker. He's on
duty right now. Would you like me
to page him?

RUFUS

Yes, please.

RECEPTIONIST

(In a loudspeaker)

Ken Walker, please report to the
front reception desk...It'll just be
a moment.

A grey haired bent over, sixty year old man wearing a jumpsuit with his name on it shuffles in with a mop and bucket in tow.

KENNETH

(To the receptionist)

Did you need some work done here?

DONNIE

Un-Un kle Kenny? It's
DDonnie...MMarla's son.

KENNETH

Donnie? Donnie? No...The Donnie I
remember was just a little guy.

DONNIE

I ggrowed.

KENNETH

I'll say you did.

They exchange hugs.

DONNIE

This is my bbest friend, Rufus.

KENNETH

(Shaking hands)

Hello Rufus. What brings you two
to Hollywood? Vacation?
Sightseeing? Business perhaps? You
two are dressed to kill.

DONNIE

We ccame to ssee you.

KENNETH

Me? Why would anyone travel all
that way to see me?

DONNIE

Rufus is a mmovie actor. Yyou're a
movie producer. Sso you could make
him a mmovie star.

KENNETH

Is that why you came? You thought
I was a movie producer?

DONNIE

That's what mmama always ssaid.

KENNETH

I'm afraid I might have
exaggerated a bit to your mother.
I really do work with movie
producers; it's just that I clean
their offices. I'm so sorry to
disappoint you Donnie. I'm just a
sad example of a dream gone bad.

RUFUS

You gotta place to live?

KENNETH

They let me stay in the janitor's
room here. I'd love to have you
here, but they won't allow anyone
staying with me...Not even if I were
to find a willing female...Are you
boys low on cash? I could give you
a few bucks to help you out.

RUFUS

No, we just best be goin.

KENNETH

Listen, if you need a meal,
there's a Christian charity, name
of Loaves and Fishes on fifth
street. They put out a good
breakfast to guys who need...

RUFUS and DONNIE abruptly leave the building.

CUT TO:

EXT. THE STREETS OF HOLLYWOOD - NIGHT

The night comes to life. Club hustlers work as hard as the
prostitutes. Homeless dot the streets. They are kicked and
spat upon by euphoric youths exiting the clubs. This is all
culture shock to RUFUS and DONNIE who wander aimlessly.

DONNIE

D-damn him, Uncle KKenny. He's a
lliar. He lied to my mmama.

RUFUS

Forget it, just forget it. Let
that be a lesson to you...Can't
depend on no one for nothing cept
yourself. Nobody cares about your
troubles.

DONNIE

But Pastor JJim said God wants you
to pput your troubles on his
sshoulders.

RUFUS

How is it you can't remember your
name, but you can remember word
for word what Pastor Jim said?

DONNIE

I ccan remember my name. It's
DDonnie.

RUFUS

If you don't think we're on our
own just look around. Do you think
God would stick his nose in a hell
hole like this?

RUFUS spots a transformer behind a grocery store.

RUFUS (CONT)

Head over that way.

They approach the transformer and RUFUS is gratified to
soak up the heat it radiates.

RUFUS (CONT)

This baby is like sittin around a
campfire. All we need now are the
wieners and marshmallows.

DONNIE

I ccould sure go ffor some
wweiners and marshmallows.

RUFUS

We'll check out the breakfast at Loaves and Fishes tomorrow. Till then I'm just gonna check out, period. I never have slept in a tux before...you?

DONNIE

Nope.

RUFUS

I didn't think so.

CUT TO:

EXT. THE LOAVES AND FISHES CENTER - EARLY MORNING

The sun has barely begun to light the streets as RUFUS and DONNIE approach the center. RUFUS is stopped in his tracks when he sees the multitude of homeless who are lined up to receive a morning meal.

CUT TO:

INT. LOAVES AND FISHES CENTER - LATER IN THE MORNING

RUFUS and DONNIE are in line. They have made their way inside the building and are approaching the cafeteria style food buffet. They savor the smells and gaze at the food.

A woman visits each table of homeless diners. She is Mary, an attractive thirty year old whose mission is to make the lives of these unfortunates just a bit better. She brings a smile and encouragement to each person and receives the same in return. She finds a group of regulars.

MARY

(Kidding a frail man)

Joe, have you been working out?
You're looking mighty buff.

JOE

I've been picking up soda cans and taking them to the recycle center.

MARY

Well it shows...

(To the rest of the
group)

It got a little nippy last night.
Were you all able to keep warm?

NATE

Only because of you and the
blankets you passed out. Thanks
Mary.

MARY

My pleasure gentlemen.

She leaves the group to survey the procession alongside her
co-worker, BARRY. They both eye the extraordinary sight of
RUFUS and DONNIE wearing tuxes beside the other ragged men.

MARY

(To BARRY)

What's wrong with this picture?

BARRY

Maybe they came to donate and got
in the wrong line.

MARY starts to fume as she storms towards RUFUS and DONNIE.

MARY

Gentlemen, my name is Mary Odwyer
and I am in charge of dispensing
meals to the homeless and needy.

RUFUS

Morning Mam, I'm Rufus and this is
Donnie... Nice spread you got here.

MARY

So nice in fact that some people
who can afford to pay for their
own meals and who dress in
expensive outfits, would rather
take advantage of the limited
resources we struggle to secure

(MORE)

MARY (CONT'D)

for those in dire need of help. I would suggest gentlemen, that you voluntarily vacate the premises before I have you unceremoniously escorted out.

RUFUS stares her down before retaining his cool.

RUFUS

C'mom Donnie.

DONNIE

B-But RRufus, I...

RUFUS

She's right. There aint no place we belong.

RUFUS heads to with door followed by a reluctant DONNIE.

CUT TO:

INT. LOAVES AND FISHES CENTER - LATER THAT DAY

MARY and BARRY are finishing the cleanup after the morning meal. MARY removes her apron and tosses over BARRY'S head.

MARY

Another day at the office...I've got some errands to run...anything we need from the store?

BARRY

A big box of hundred dollar bills.

MARY

Okay, but only if they're on sale.

CUT TO:

EXT. OUTSIDE THE LOAVES AND FISHES CENTER - MINUTES LATER

MARY slides into her modest ten year old Ford Taurus. She drives a distance to the grocery store. As she makes her way through the parking lot she catches a glimpse of the dumpster behind the building. A man is rummaging through its contents, tossing food scraps to another standing outside. Her stare intensifies when she notices the two men are in tuxedos. She realizes the horrible mistake she made earlier. MARY parks her car to go face RUFUS and DONNIE.

MARY

I don't suppose you'll find any
bacon and eggs in there.

RUFUS

(Sarcastically)

No, but at least we're welcome to
what scraps we can find.

MARY

I'm so sorry...the way I judged you.
But those tuxedos, they threw me
off course.

RUFUS

We gotta return them in about
three more hours. That's when the
clock strikes midnight and our
carriage turns back into a
pumpkin.

MARY

And you'll go back to waiting for
your handsome prince to sweep you
off your feet to live happily ever
after.

RUFUS

I'd actually prefer a princess,
but beggars can't be choosers.

The animosity has disappeared as they both enjoy a laugh.
RUFUS tosses DONNIE the last of the booty and hops out.

RUFUS

Would you like to join us?...Got
plenty.

MARY

No, I think I'll pass, but please be my guest tomorrow morning.

RUFUS

I don't know...But I do appreciate the offer.

MARY

It was Rufus and Donnie, right?

DONNIE

Yes Mam, I-I'm DDonnie.

MARY

I haven't seen you here before. Where did you come from?

DONNIE

GGeorgia...We ccome out to mmake Rufus a mmovie star.

MARY

I see...Well, Hollywood is full of starving actors.

RUFUS

Yes Mam.

MARY

Please don't call me Mam. That's my mother's name. Call me Mary.

DONNIE

MMary...Yes MMam.

MARY

A lot of starving actors hold down other jobs in this town until they get their big break. I might be able to find you some work...if you're willing.

RUFUS

We've never been afraid of work.

MARY

All right then. If you come by in the morning I'll see what I can do. Is it a date?

RUFUS

It's a date.

CUT TO:

INT. LOAVES AND FISHES CENTER - NEXT MORNING

RUFUS and DONNIE are once again in the breakfast line. This time they fit in perfectly with the local clientele. Their clothes are filthy and they have a growth of beard. RUFUS studies MARY'S every move as she bounces from table to table. She sees him and they exchange waves and smiles. RUFUS and DONNIE exit the line with food on their plates. MARY motions for them to join her alongside a group homeless men.

MARY

You two look more stylish today.

RUFUS

They say clothes make the man.

MARY

Let me introduce you to some of my friends. Here's Joe, the bodybuilder...Nate, who's been a regular here since...well longer than I've been here.

NATE

Maybe longer than you've been alive.

MARY

...And Bobby, my guardian angel. He came to my rescue one night when my car broke down. Some very unsavory mechanics were ready to strip my car...and probably me too, until Bobby and some of his friends chased them off.

BOBBY

You're the one who's come to our rescue Mary. For most of us this is the only decent meal we eat all day.

MARY

I wish I could do more. People don't realize you guys are actually the eyes and ears for the police throughout the night.

NATE

We're happy to be of service.

MARY

Guys, this is Rufus and Donnie. They've come to visit us from Georgia.

They exchange general greeting and handshakes.

JOE

Say, where are those fancy threads you were wearing yesterday?

RUFUS

Had to givem back. We just rented them to try and make an impression for a job.

JOE

Did you get it?

DONNIE

N-No, MMy uncle was a liar.

RUFUS

Didn't turn out like we hoped.

NATE

We've been there. Sometimes life stinks, but you gotta keep hoping...Thee might be something new right around the corner.

JOE

What kind of work you do?

DONNIE

He's an aactor.

RUFUS

An actor who's never performed
anywhere.

MARY

Speaking of which...I talked to my
friends about giving you two a
job. He manages a restaurant. He
said he could use some help in the
kitchen.

RUFUS

Hmmm, I can boil water if you like
it well done.

MARY

You're in luck...Fortunately the job
is washing dishes. Should I tell
him you're interested?

RUFUS

More than interested...thankful.

CUT TO:

INT. A MEXICAN RESTAURANT - DAY

RUFUS and DONNIE are in the kitchen working on a mountain
of dirty dishes. RUFUS washes and DONNIE dries. MARY enters
the restaurant and is greeted by CARLOS, the manager.

CARLOS

Ah, senorita Mary, como esta?

MARY

Bien, y tu?

CARLOS

Bien, gracias. Are you here for
lunch?

MARY

Actually no. I just stopped by to
see how the two men I sent over
are doing.

CARLOS

Excellent, very excellent. They arrive early and work hard...never complain. They seem happy to be here. I am grateful to you for sending them.

MARY

Would it be possible to see them?

CARLOS

Of course, come with me.

He leads her past the bustling lunch rush, through the kitchen and to the wash area. There he leaves MARY. She smiles to RUFUS and DONNIE. She is pleased to see RUFUS' face light up to see her.

RUFUS

Plenty of work around here...Grab a sponge.

MARY

What? And deprive you of your fun.

DONNIE

H-Hello Miss Mary.

MARY

Hello Donnie. How is your new job?

DONNIE

I llike it jjust fine, but the sstack of dirty dishes nnever gets smaller.

MARY

I guess that means business is good. Carlos tells me you two are doing so well that he's afraid you may take over his job soon.

DONNIE

Oh-oh I don't think tthat will happen. Do you think, RRufus?

RUFUS

Ya never know, anything is possible. Isn't that right Mary?

MARY

That's right, anything is possible...I've missed you both at the morning meals.

RUFUS

Well we kinda felt that since we were makin a few bucks now, we should be buyin our own food...Not takin it from the guys who really need it.

MARY

That's very noble of you, but couldn't you use it for shelter?

RUFUS

We're all right for now. We got a nice warm transformer to snuggle up to behind that grocery store where you found us in the dumpster.

MARY

I guess that's good for now.

(Suggestively)

It's always nice to have something warm to snuggle up to...Still, I really would like it if you'd come by in the mornings...we could talk.

DONNIE

I-I'll come by Miss MMary. I love the food.

RUFUS

Seem I got no choice. Me and Donnie are inseparable. If he'll be there, I'll be there.

CUT TO:

EXT. A SKATE PARK - LATER THAT AFTERNOON

An activities center is thriving with basketball and handball courts. However the main attraction is the skateboard course where daredevils perform stunts on the groomed walls. RYAN, ZACH, and MIKE are filming the risk takers. They have been drinking and are in high spirits. RYAN is clearly in charge. He is filming and directing the skateboarders. RUFUS and DONNIE have left work and are walking down the street. They are drawn to the spectacle.

RYAN

Okay, who can give me the shit ass hairiest stunt ever filmed?

SHATEBOARDER

Like what?

ZACH

Do a flying summersault and land back on the board.

SKATEBOARDER

Yeah right, like I want to split my skull open.

MIKE rips off a can of beer from the six pack and waves it.

MIKE

Do it for a brew?

RUFUS and DONNIE have been watching the exchanges of words and are keenly aware the teens have a stash of booze. MIKE'S offer sends DONNIE over the top. He jumps in front of the camera dancing and waving.

DONNIE

I-I'll do it! GGimme a BBrew!

ZACH

Get out of the picture, you can't board.

DONNIE

I can ddance...watch mme dance.

DONNIE starts to dance a jig while humming a tune. He nearly froths at the mouth. His dance quickens and becomes more exaggerated. The teens are cracking up at this fool and urge him to greater heights with clapping and yelling until DONNIE'S legs can no longer stabilize his huge frame and he collapses. Prostrate and panting he starts to beg.

DONNIE

B-Beer. I need a bbeer.

MIKE pops a can of beer and from chest high starts to pour it on DONNIE'S face. DONNIE is desperate for the beer and laps at it like a dog. RUFUS has seen enough. He takes the remaining can of beer from MIKE'S hand and gives it to DONNIE. He then takes a fresh can from the six pack, pops it open, and guzzles it down himself.

MIKE

Who said you could have that?

RUFUS

He earned one for the both of us.

RYAN

Sure, no problem, in fact there's plenty more to be earned. You guys want to work for booze?

RUFUS

I aint afraid of work. What do you want me to do?

RYAN

Something big... spectacular.
Something I can put on film and people will say shit!.. I've never seen anything like that before.

DONNIE

Rufus is a aactor.

RYAN

There you go Rufus. Here's your chance to break in to show biz.

RUFUS has finished his beer. He lightens up as he tries to coerce more from them.

RUFUS

Yeah, I could be your star...but stars gotta get paid well. What else ya got to drink in that car.

ZACH

(Opens the trunk)

Whatever you want man...we've got.

RUFUS is drawn to the booze like a moth to a flame. He grabs a bottle of vodka and can't get it open and shoved down his throat fast enough. The clear liquid starts to evaporate as RUFUS holds the bottle upright. ZACH grabs RUFUS' arm to try and slow the pace but RUFUS will not be denied. He's going to down it all before they can stop him.

ZACH

Hey asshole, slow down.

MIKE

Mother fucker, drank it all!

RUFUS is like a kid who has just pull off a hilarious prank. He laughs and dances, spinning out of control. He then thrusts the empty bottle at the feet of the bewildered teen, shattering it into a thousand pieces.

RUFUS

What else you got to drink?

RYAN

Hold on man. I said you gotta earn your booze.

RUFUS

Then let's get to work.

RYAN surveys the available props. He dreams up a scene.

RYAN

(To ZACH and MIKE)

You guys borrow that skateboard...See that handball wall? We're going to let Rufus take a little ride laid out on the skateboard, down the hill and into the wall...You game Rufus? I've got a beer for you.

RUFUS

Hell Yeah! And one for Donnie too!

The teens are giddy with excitement as they set up the shot. RUFUS weaves to his mark at the top of the hill. He starts to sit on the board but is redirected by ZACH who is there to put him belly down and head first.

ZACH

No..no..no sitting Rufus. We want this to be awesome right? You're gonna do it head first.

RUFUS is too incoherent to object. He meekly complies.

RYAN

Everybody ready? Countdown! Five, four, three, two, one, blastoff!

As if he needed any extra momentum, ZACH starts to push RUFUS down the hill until he can no longer keep up. The three teens scream and laugh at the top of their lungs while DONNIE silently watches with concern. An instant before the head on collision the skateboard flips sideways and hurls RUFUS' entire body into the wall. It probably saves his life but leaves him battered and bruised. RUFUS lays virtually motionless as everyone comes running to him. RYAN continues filming RUFUS' agony.

RUFUS

Awwwg, awwwg, I need a drink.

The boys laugh hysterically.

MIKE

A drink? He needs a stretcher.

ZACH

You're a star, man.

RYAN

I've got just the title for him...Rufus the Stunt Bum...C'mon Rufus let's do take two.

RUFUS

After I drink my painkiller.

Raucous laughter.

CUT TO:

INT. LOAVES AND FISHES CENTER - NEXT MORNING

The usual homeless faces are lined up at the buffet receiving breakfast. MARY performs her customary greetings, all the while glancing to the entrance in hopes of seeing RUFUS and DONNIE walk through the door.

The morning has worn on. The food is being put away. It is now obvious that RUFUS and DONNIE are not going to show. MARY tries to hide her disappointment but BARRY senses a change in her behavior. He watches her absentmindedly fill the sugar shaker with salt.

BARRY

Are you trying to play a practical joke on these guys?...Putting salt in the sugar shaker?

MARY

What am I doing? I'm not thinking.

BARRY

Actually you were thinking. The question is about what?

MARY

Barry, do you think the men that come in here are just down on their luck, or are they simply irresponsible and the cause of their own problems?

BARRY

I'd say the truth lies somewhere in the middle. Some have given up hope and are resigned to living without dreams. Those are the men who desperately need our help. Then there are the men who live each day in hope that their dream will come true. Those are the men who desperately need our encouragement. Either way, we're dealing with desperate people.

MARY

And which category do you think Rufus fall under?

BARRY

Rufus? So that's where your mind has been all day.

MARY

I just sense that there is some purpose he'd destined for. Call it a sixth sense; call it a woman's intuition.

BARRY

Call it infatuation.

MARY

Does it show?

BARRY

Yes, and it looks good on you.

CUT TO:

EXT. AN ASPHALT LOT BEHIND A GROCERY STORE - NIGHT

RUFUS and DONNIE are feeling the previous night's trauma. The transformer HUMS. Another bum searches the dumpster.

RUFUS

Are you sure he said they would be here tonight. I was too blitzed to remember a thing.

DONNIE

I'm ssure. Ryan wants you to ddo more stunts. You're his sstar.

RUFUS

Is he brining the booze? God I need a drink. I'm in pain.

RUFUS sees the other bum rummaging through his territory.

RUFUS (CONT)

Hey, who's that bum?

DONNIE

I ddunno.

RUFUS

Hey moron! Get off my property!

BUM

You don't own this dumpster.

RUFUS

If you don't, I'll own your ass.
That's my personal restaurant.

The BUM jumps out and flips him off.

BUM

God bless you too man.

As the BUM walks away a detailed late modeled pick up recklessly weaves into the lot and side swipes the BUM, knocking him off his feet. The truck is driven by RYAN who along with ZACH and two girlfriends, momentarily stops to verbally abuse the victim.

RYAN

You fuckin bum, you swerved right
into my truck.

He burns rubber the short distance to RUFUS and DONNIE.

RYAN (CONT)

Here you go girls, take a look at
the stars of our show.

The girls gawk at the disheveled men who approach.

RUFUS

You bring somethin to down?

RYAN

I never disappoint.

RYAN'S GIRL

You don't look like a movie star.

RUFUS

I aint no star. I'm just a bum.

ZACH'S GIRL

You're not going to let them sit next to us are you? I can smell them from here.

RYAN

You two get in the bed of the truck. I'll give you a six pack to get you in the mood for tonight's shoot. Mike has it scouted out.

RYAN hands a six pack to RUFUS who chugs one down. He hands one to DONNIE and pops another while stumbling to the back.

CUT TO:

EXT. AN ABANDONED LOT - NIGHT

A congregation of homeless prepares to spend the night. An asphalt campground is encompassed by forsaken buildings. Several have pitched makeshift tents and sleeping bags. Three men share a bottle while warming themselves beside a flaming metal barrel. One deranged man patrols the area in his underwear. MIKE is relieved to see RYAN'S truck arrive.

RYAN

Okay, bum city, everybody out...Showtime, gentlemen.

RYAN has to shake RUFUS and DONNIE who are laid out already half blitzed. RUFUS sits up and looks around at the bums.

RUFUS

Hey, I know some of these guys.

RYAN

And when we get done they're ALL gonna know you...Mike, have you got the cart?

MIKE

Yeah, that bum said we could use his for a beer.

RUFUS

(To RYAN)

You gonna do some grocery shoppin?

RYAN

I've already found my meal ticket.
Time to earn your wages stunt
bum...See those steps over there?

RUFUS tries to focus on a mountain of concrete steps.

RYAN (CONT)

You're going to the very top and
then climb inside the cart. When I
say action, Mike is going to
launch you and you're going to get
the ride of your life.

RUFUS

That's a lot of steps.

RYAN

That's why you're Rufus, the super
stunt bum.

RUFUS

What do we get for me doin it?

RYAN

Would you rather have a million
dollars or a bottle of Jim Beam?

RUFUS

Shit, if I had a million dollars
I'd be out of a job. Give me the
Jim Beam.

RYAN

ZACH, a bottle for the talent...
Mike, haul that cart to the top of
the steps... You girls are the
cheerleaders...and I'm going set my
camera angles.

Everybody goes about their appointed tasks as RUFUS and
DONNIE sit on the ground sharing their bottle and watch.

DONNIE

Y-You really gonna do it Rufus?

RUFUS

That's a lot of steps.

DONNIE

Y-You think its ssafe?

RUFUS

If I had pads, a crash helmet, and
a roll bar I'd still be lucky to
survive.

DONNIE

Then why you ggonna do it?

RUFUS

Donnie, sometimes you ask some
very good questions. Let me know
when you come up with the answers.

(Taking one last gaze)

..That's a lot of steps.

RYAN

All right Rufus we're ready.

RUFUS staggers on all fours to the top of the steps where
MIKE awaits with the shopping cart.

RYAN (CONT)

(Ringmaster style)

Ladies and gentlemen, what you are
about to witness is a death
defying act no bum has ever
attempted before. Your attention
please to the top of the steps
where Rufus, the super stunt bum
will descend the mountain of
misery in his silver chariot...May I
have the drum roll please...

ZACH grabs two sticks and begins drumming on a barrel.

RYAN (CONT)

..Cheerleaders please...

The girls start screaming encouragement to RUFUS.

RYAN

Ready, set, action!

MIKE casts RUFUS on his journey. Every step is more bone jarring than the previous as the cart gains momentum. The teens are exuberant but DONNIE and the homeless feel concern and empathy. RUFUS suffers a severe whiplash which cracks his skull on the handle bar. The cart flips over near the bottom and throws RUFUS the last half dozen steps on his own where he lays motionless. DONNIE runs to him.

DONNIE

R-Rufus! R-Rufus!

He tries to find some sign of life as the teens sprint onto the scene still laughing and filming.

DONNIE

Is he ddead?

RYAN

Naw, he's just passed out...look.

RYAN grabs ZACH'S beer and pours it on RUFUS' face. The elixir produces the desired result as RUFUS comes to life.

RYAN (CONT)

See, I told you so.

(To RUFUS)

You were spectacular my man. Take a break...Donnie, come with me.

The entire group abandons RUFUS to follow RYAN and DONNIE. RUFUS is semi-conscious, trying to watch the next act.

RYAN

It's your turn Donnie. You've had a lot to drink...Now time for a piss. Go piss on that sleeping bum...Okay?

DONNIE dutifully proceeds to the sleeping bum. It is JOE. DONNIE stands over JOE and unzips his fly. RYAN and his entourage are filming the event, unable to contain their delight. DONNIE begins to urinate when RYAN barks an order.

RYAN

Piss in his ear!

DONNIE redirects the stream which fills JOE'S ear and splashes onto his face. Joe awakens in horror.

JOE

Hey! What the hell!?!...He's pissin
on me. This jerk is pissin on me!

NATE and BOBBY come to JOE'S aid. They jump on DONNIE and are soon joined by a small army of homeless. DONNIE is valiant in his struggle but is overmatched. The end comes when one of the men swings a stick which connects onto DONNIE'S lower back. DONNIE crumbles to the ground as the kicking and beating continues. RYAN and his crew continue to film, all the while bursting with excitement.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. THE PICKUP TRUCK - LATER THAT NIGHT

The teens are still giddy from their exploits. They are driving back to dump off RUFUS and DONNIE, who are laid out virtually motionless in the bed of the truck.

ZACH

(To RYAN)

Tell me you got all of it on film.

RYAN

Shit yes!

ZACH, MIKE, and the girls all howl their approval.

MIKE

This is the best school film ever!

RYAN

Fuck the school film. Don't you see what we have here? People would pay serious money to see what we filmed tonight.

ZACH

You think so? How much money?

RYAN

A shitload. All we have to do is stage enough of these fuckin bum fights and we could all be millionaires.

The excitement builds and party gets louder. In the bed of the truck RUFUS and DONNIE listen to the COMMOTION.

RUFUS

Sounds like a party in there and we're not invited.

DONNIE

I ddon't feel like ggoin anyway.

RUFUS

How'd you let yourself get beat up like that? Didn't I teach you nothin?

DONNIE

There was ssix or seven of tthem.

DONNIE coughs and a trickle of blood drips from his mouth.

RUFUS

So? You still got em outmanned.

RUFUS gets no response. He looks over to see the blood.

CUT TO:

EXT. AN ASPHALT LOT BEHIND A GROCERY STORE - MINUTES LATER

Ryan wheels into the lot and stops near the transformer. He yells out the window.

RYAN

All bums vacate the truck!

RUFUS and DONNIE drag themselves out and collapse.

RYAN (CONT)

You guys did a great job tonight. You're going to be rich and famous as part of my BFK.

RUFUS

What's a BFK?

RYAN

My Bum Fight Krew.

RYAN throws them a bottle of booze.

RYAN (CONT)

Here, take your medicine...Make
sure your sorry asses are here
whenever I want you to work.

They all howl with laughter as they leave.

CUT TO:

INT. LOAVES AND FISHES CENTER - MORNING

The homeless perform their daily ritual of eating
breakfast. MARY and BARRY are helping to dish out the food.
MARY goes to greet JOE and NATE minus BOBBY at their table.

MARY

Hi fellas, where's Bobby today?

Neither JOE nor NATE will look up to respond to her.

MARY

Is something wrong?...Joe?, Nate?
Tell me.

NATE

Bobby is in the hospital. That big
oaf you introduced us to broke his
jaw.

MARY

Who? Donnie?...I can't believe it.

JOE

Well you can believe he pissed on
me...Right in my ear.

MARY

Donnie did that?

JOE

God's truth.

MARY

But, why?

NATE

They were filming him...those teenage criminals. They get them all boozed up and promise to make them movie stars...Just makes them fools if you ask me.

MARY

And where was Rufus during this?

NATE

Half passed out. He drank himself into a stupor.

MARY

Are you sure it was the same two men I introduced you to?

JOE

Positive...I won't ever forget them.

MARY leaves disheartened. She goes back to BARRY.

MARY

Barry, I've got to check something out. I'll be back in a while.

BARRY

Okay, I'll hold down the fort.

CUT TO:

INT. A MEXICAN RESTAURANT - A SHORT TIME LATER

MARY is hoping against hope that RUFUS and DONNIE are working their normal shift. She is greeted by CARLOS.

CRLOS

Senorita Mary, welcome.

MARY

Hello Carlos, I just came by to see how my friends were doing.

CARLOS

Ah yes, seniors Rufus and Donnie...I was very happy with their work, and I believe they were happy too...but a few days ago they did not show up, and the same the next day and the next day. I'm afraid they will come no more.

MARY

They didn't give you a reason?

CARLOS

No senorita, none whatsoever.

MARY

Thank you Carlos...and, I'm sorry.

CARLOS

Not to be sorry. I wish for them the best.

MARY

I hope so too.

CUT TO:

EXT. AN ASPHALT LOT BEHIND A GROCERY STORE - THAT AFTERNOON

RUFUS and DONNIE are laid out in the same spot RYAN left them. Ryan pulls his truck up alongside them.

RYAN

You two don't look like you've moved an inch since I left.

RUFUS

We haven't. We're still trying to recover from yesterday.

DONNIE lets go a deep cough.

RUFUS (CONT)

I think Donnie is sick. He's been hackin all night.

RYAN

That's okay, no filming tonight;
I've got something else planned.

RUFUS

Why do I get a sick feeling when I
hear you say that?

RYAN

C'mon, I'm your pal. You're my BFK
and I want everyone who sees you
to know it. Hop in the truck and
grab a bottle. I'll fill you in on
the details.

RUFUS helps DONNIE to his feet. He snatches the bottle from
RYAN'S hand as they painstakingly get into the truck.

CUT TO:

INT. A TATOO PARLOR - LATER THAT AFTERNOON

RUFUS and DONNIE have numbed all pain. Two tattoo artists
work on them. Bold red two inch letters stand out on
DONNIE'S head which read BUMFIGHT. RUFUS is having the same
word imprinted on his knuckles...one letter per knuckle. RYAN
inspects both tattoos.

RYAN

Excellent! Now when you plant your
fist on someone's jaw, you'll give
him his own tattoo.

(To DONNIE)

...And you look like a fuckin
walking billboard...Bums are gonna
shit when they see your face.

DONNIE

But if they're af-fraid they won't
be mmy friend.

RYAN

Sure they will...They'll want to be
in the big show too. I'm gonna
make them all famous. These
tattoos's are just like putting
makeup on for the show. All the
stars wear makeup, right Donnie?

DONNIE

I-I guess so.

RYAN

Good. You're my bum fight krew...I'm counting on you guys.

RUFUS

And what can we count on you for?

RYAN

Hey, when we strike it rich I'll take care of you, until then, who else would give you a job? Don't be a fuckin ingrate bum.

RUFUS

I just meant sometimes we could use some cash for a decent meal.

RYAN

If I gave you cash it would go straight to a bottle anyway. I'm saving you the trip to the liquor store...Just remember who it is that comes to your rescue when you start to dry out and your head is pounding and your body convulses. It's me...always me...I'm your fuckin white knight...Without me; you don't even have a reason to live.

CUT TO:

EXT. A PARKING LOT OUTSIDE A LIQUOR STORE - NIGHT

A group of six homeless men are sitting against the building. They share stories and a bottle. Ryan's BFK is on the prowl and slowly drives by. He suddenly shifts into reverse and backs up to the potential battleground then drives into the lot. RYAN gets out with camera in hand.

RYAN

(To ZACH and MIKE)

Load up our hit squad with the ammunition...We've got a target.

ZACH and MIKE grab two cans of yellow spray paint. RUFUS and DONNIE have been sharing a bottle. They are oblivious to what is happening. ZACH snatches the bottle out of RUFUS' hand and replaces it with a can of paint. MIKE places a can in DONNIE'S hand as they are herded out of the bed of the truck.

RYAN

All right, here's your mission.
There's the enemy...

(He points to the
bums)

...These cans are your weapons. You go over and spray the word BUM all over them, then grab their bottle and down it...Ready?...Action!

RUFUS and DONNIE wildly spray the startled men. RUFUS pries away the bottle and starts to chug its contents.

HOMELESS MAN

Hey, you damn thief, give it back!

The man lurches to rescue his prize but RUFUS shoves him to the ground. The other men are called to action and attack RUFUS. DONNIE steps in and the fight is on. Fists and bodies fly as both sides pay a bloody price. In the end RUFUS and DONNIE prove victorious for the rolling camera. ZACH and MIKE raise RUFUS and DONNIE'S arms as would a referee in a prize fight.

RYAN

Winner and still champion bum
fighters...Rufus and Donnie!

CUT TO:

A montage of several fight sequences.

A.) RUFUS and DONNIE leap from a rooftop onto a group of homeless knocking several to the ground. This initiates a scuffle which is filmed by Ryan and his friends.

B.) RUFUS and DONNIE play bowling for bums by rolling a barrel into the back of several bum's legs. A fight ensues from which they leave broken bodies in their wake.

C.) RUFUS and DONNIE pour five gallon buckets of water on sleeping homeless and then punch out those wanting to fight

D.) A series of slow motion fists connect with flying teeth. Pieces of flesh tear with blood pumping from brutal beatings. RUFUS head butts a victim into submission. At the end of the montage are RUFUS and DONNIE with swollen and blood filled faces. Their arms are raised high by the teens in a sign of victory.

CUT TO:

INT. RYAN'S BEDROOM -

RYAN is at this computer, surrounded by stacks of DVD's He is kicked back with his feet on his desk as he speaks of his dilemma into his cell phone.

RYAN

Zach, I'm telling you this is unfucking believable. Every time I log in there's another hundred orders. We've got every degenerate in the country wanting a copy of these bum fights... (Pause) ...I know, I know, it's phenomenal. I need you and Mike full time to get these orders out. Get your asses over here...We're going to be fucking millionaires!

CUT TO:

INT. AN OFFICE AT LOAVES AND FISHES - DAY

BARRY intensely watches a video. He is visibly upset to see RUFUS and DONNIE performing degrading stunts and fighting other homeless. MARY enters and hangs her coat.

MARY

Good morning Barry...Have you got a new porn video?

BARRY

I wish it were only porn...This is a whole lot more disturbing.

MARY

What is it?

BARRY

If I told you, you wouldn't believe me. You'll just have to watch for yourself.

MARY'S cheerful appearance changes as she begins to watch. She is horrified but cannot take her eyes away. Her knees buckle and she collapses into a chair. She recognizes RUFUS as the perpetrator and gasps.

MARY

Where did you get this?

BARRY

Joe gave it to me. He says it's all over the internet. They're selling copies by the tens of thousands.

MARY

Oh Rufus...why?...Barry, what are we going to do?

BARRY

What can we do? I've already contacted the police. They said they would need someone in the video to step forward and press charges. Rufus has to tell them he was solicited by those film makers to commit a felony. He knows the whole story. He was there right from the start.

MARY

...And Rufus is the only one who can end it.

CUT TO:

EXT. AN ASPHALT LOT BEHIND A GROCERY STORE - AFTERNOON

RUFUS and DONNIE are camped by the transformer. RUFUS dines on day old pastry and beer while DONNIE lies on his side.

RUFUS

Want somethin to eat?

DONNIE

Naw, I ddon't think so.

RUFUS sees DONNIE cough up a trickle of blood.

RUFUS

You're always hungry...Are you doing all right bud?

DONNIE

I just feel a little sore...inside.

RUFUS

Maybe you better not do any fighting for a while.

DONNIE

(Upset at the thought)

N-No, no don't leave mme Rufus. DDon't leave me. I want to bbe with you.

RUFUS

Okay, okay relax. Where ever we go we'll go together, all right?

DONNIE

Yeah, yeah always together.

RUFUS' stomach starts to turn as he watches RYAN'S truck roll into the parking lot. RYAN, MIKE and ZACH exit armed with a six pack of beer and several bottles of booze. RYAN throws a beer to RUFUS and pops open a second can which he places under DONNIE'S nose.

RYAN

How are my BFK boys?...Ready to rumble?

RUFUS

I don't think Donnie is up to it.

DONNIE

Yes I-I am...I wwant to fight.

DONNIE rises and starts throwing punches.

RYAN

That's my man...We've got a great idea for a fight...Do you guys know the bum they call Black Beauty?

RUFUS

I heard of him. He's like eight foot tall and four hundred pounds...Thinks he's got an alien chip in his skull.

RYAN

He's just a crack head. His brain is fried...Your fans want to see you bring him down. We've got bonus booze for this one, enough to keep you buzzed for a week...Unless of course, you're afraid.

RUFUS

The only thing I'm afraid of is you runnin out of booze...Let's go.

CUT TO:

EXT. A PARK - AFTERNOON

A section of the park is taken over by the homeless community. They are occupied by card games, grooming, and of course, getting high. In their mist stands a giant black man, BLACK BEAUTY. He is an intimidating figure who extorts possessions and pays with fear. He incoherently mumbles and curses which only adds to his mystique. He grabs a passerby

BLACK BEAUTY

Hey man, what you got you can do me with?

PASSERBY

I got nothing for you man. If I did you know I'd fix you up.

BLACK BEAUTY

Don't lie to me. I can smell the shit in your hair. You want that I rip out your hair?

PASSERBY

Wait, wait...Let me take a look.

The PASSERBY checks all his pockets and then comes to a realization. He pulls from his sock a speck of crystal which he places in BLACK BEAUTY'S enormous hand.

PASSERBY (CONT)

Here you go bro...See? I told you
I'd help...We cool now right?

BLACK BEAUTY

Shit!

He throws the PASSERBY down and looks for more victims.

RYAN'S truck pulls into the park. The teens pile out with their camera gear and begin scouting.

RYAN

Where does this Black Beauty dude
hang?

ZACH

Bum town, dead ahead.

RYAN

Let's check it out krew.

RUFUS and DONNIE join the teens. It doesn't take long to spot the standout figure of BLACK BEAUTY.

MIKE

Whoa! That bum is monstrous.

RYAN

This is going to be a
classic...Rufus, there's your
target...Go kick his ass.

RUFUS is drunk and defiant. He sways towards the giant.

RUFUS

Hey you ugly son-of-a-bitch, was
your mama a gorilla?

RUFUS has BLACK BEAUTY'S full attention and the interest of the entire community.

BLACK BEAUTY

What you know of my mama?

RUFUS

I know she had to be butt ugly to
shit out a piece of crap like you.

The insult puts BLACK BEAUTY into overdrive. He slings a steel barrel at RUFUS who is too blitzed to get out of the way and is knocked down. DONNIE rushes over and bends down to lift RUFUS to his feet. He raises RUFUS with a bear hug face to face. In the process, RUFUS is able to peer over DONNIE'S shoulder to see a charging elephant in BLACK BEAUTY with a board in his hand. Before RUFUS can warn DONNIE, he is struck in the same spot which he was hurt before. DONNIE crumbles to the ground in agony. RUFUS musters the coordination to land a blow to the face of BLACK BEAUTY which immediately opens a gash above his eye. BLACK BEAUTY is unfazed and starts swinging.

A series of blows puts RUFUS in the advantage. Even drunk he is too quick for the ogre...But when one of BLACK BEAUTY'S friends trips RUFUS, the giant pounces on top, pinning RUFUS to the ground. BLACK BEAUTY sits on the defenseless RUFUS and starts to pound away at his face.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. AN ASPHALT LOT BEHIND A GROCERY STORE - NIGHT

Ryan's pick up slowly moves into position to dump its cargo. RUFUS and DONNIE look like they have been tortured. Dried blood is on RUFUS' face and clothes and even his hair. He face is bruised and one eye is swollen shut. One tooth has been noticeably snapped in half. DONNIE too is bloodied but his is fresh and flowing from his mouth with every painful cough. RYAN, ZACH and MIKE get out of the truck and stare at the pathetic sight.

RYAN

What the fuck kind of exhibition
was that? I can't use that
footage. My bum fight crew is
suppose to do the ass kicking, not
rollover like pussies. I wasted my

(MORE)

RYAN (CONT'D)

whole day on you bums. If you can't fight you might as well be dead...You're worthless, absolutely worthless.

(To ZACH)

No booze for these losers. Let them suffer for a while.

ZACH gathers any remaining bottles they can find.

RYAN

(To Mike)

Help me unload the garbage.

They slide RUFUS and DONNIE out of the truck and leave them a broken and crumpled mess. The teens get into the truck and abandon them.

CUT TO:

INT. LOAVES AND FISHES CENTER - MORNING

MARY and BARRY are behind the pans of food, dishing out meals to the line of homeless. JOE arrives with his tray.

JOE

Delightful morning isn't it Mary?

MARY

Yes, very nice Joe.

JOE

Did Mister Barry tell you about the big fight?

She stares at BARRY who sheepishly averts her piercing eyes

MARY

No, what big fight?

JOE

Your friends Rufus and Donnie bit off more than they could chew. They tried to pick a fight with Black Beauty...Heard they got beat up real bad...Serves them right.

JOE shuffles down the line.

MARY

(To BARRY)

Were you going to tell me about this?

BARRY

Of course...I was just waiting for the right time.

MARY

When is the right time Barry?...At their funerals?

BARRY

I wanted to check with the hospitals first...to see if any homeless had been admitted overnight. I'm just as upset about this as you are. Do you know that since those bum fight videos hit the street there have been twenty six nationwide murders of homeless people at the hands of teenagers? There's an epidemic right here. Kids come out of the clubs all pumped up and high looking for a homeless person to kick and spit on. It's out of control. We've got to get the law to shut down these videos but we need Rufus to press charges. Somehow we have to track him down.

CUT TO:

EXT. AN ASPHALT LOT BEHIND A GROCERY STORE - NIGHT

RUFUS and DONNIE are battered and swollen...physically, emotionally, and spiritually. DONNIE strains for each breath. Each breath results in coughing which has produced a pool of blood where he lays. RUFUS suffers the shivering effects of withdrawal. He is curled in a fetal position. He lifts his head to see another bum wrapped in a blanket wearing a wool cap, lying by the dumpster. RUFUS has no strength or will to object. He looks at DONNIE who spews blood from his mouth.

DONNIE

Rufus, aam I gonna ddie?

RUFUS

You've been beat up before. You never died from it.

DONNIE

It's not the bbeatin got me wwonderin. It's just that I ggot no rreason to be alive. JJust takin up sspace...like the bbum on the train. He was wworthless and he ddied. Everybody thought P Pest was worthless and he ddied...I-I'm worthless, I -I figure I sshoud die.

RUFUS

You never were any good at figurin. Didn't Pastor Jim say God had a purpose for us?...You just aint found it yet.

DONNIE

I aint afffraid to die Rufus. I gotta think llivin's the hard ppart...but I'm sscared to die alone... Promise me you wwon't let me ddie alone. I don't think I could ffind heaven by myself.

RUFUS

I aint leavin you Donnie...not now or forever. We're a team...always gonna be.

A wave of peace covers DONNIE. RUFUS too for the moment stops shivering and is able to stroke DONNIE'S head.

Truck headlights pierce the somber scene with the arrival of RYAN, ZACH, MIKE, and the two girlfriends. They have been partying and are wasted. They get out of the truck and approach RUFUS and DONNIE. ZACH carries an open bottle of vodka.

RYAN

Take a look ladies...Bum and Bummer.

He cracks up his inebriated self and the others.

RYAN (CONT)

These are the stars of our show...Aren't they pathetic? Get up you bums. You're in the presence of ladies.

RUFUS

Donnie can't move...He's sick.

ZACH

Well we've got his medicine. Come and get it.

There is more laughter as RUFUS desperately drags himself on all fours to the feet of ZACH. He reaches for the bottle.

ZACH

(Taunting)

Aw, Aw, you didn't say mother may I.

RUFUS

Mother may I...

ZACH

Please...

RUFUS

Please...

ZACH

Have my medicine.

RUFUS

Have my medicine.

ZACH allows RUFUS to grab the bottle and with both hands he shoves its neck down his throat. It becomes obvious that RUFUS is not going to let up and ZACH snatches the bottle then kicks RUFUS to the ground.

ZACH

You want more? You gotta earn it.

RYAN

We need some footage. You gotta make up for what you cost us yesterday. Let's start with a close up of that gorgeous mug of yours.

RYAN zooms in on RUFUS' face and realizes one half of a tooth is missing.

RYAN (CONT)

Hey, what happened to your million dollar smile? You're missing half a tooth.

RUFUS

It got snapped off in the fight.

RYAN smells an opportunity.

RYAN

Mike, run back to the truck and grab a pair of pliers from the tool box.

MIKE takes off.

RYAN (CONT)

We're going to have to do something about that tooth. Have you got a dental plan Rufus? No? Then I guess it's do it yourself time...Ever pulled a tooth Rufus?

MIKE returns and gives RYAN the pliers who places them in RUFUS' hands.

RYAN (CONT)

Don't start til I say action.

RUFUS is on his knees. His hands clasp the pliers. He resembles a man in prayer, begging for a way out. He inches the pliers to his mouth and clinches the partial tooth. He pauses, waiting to hear that it is only a joke...but it isn't. He twists the tooth while crying in anguish. RYAN films while the rest of the teens squirm at the spectacle of the tooth and root being ripped from the gum, leaving a gaping hole and gushing blood.

RYAN

Oh! Fuckin A.....Gross! Rufus! The toothless Bum Fighter!...We gotta film you fighting while it's still gushing.

RYAN sees the bum lying by the dumpster and points.

RYAN (CONT)

Fight that bum! Kick his ass to Hell!

RUFUS stumbles his way to the cowering bum and with a ferocious ROAR rips the blanket away to discover the bum who has invaded his sanctuary is MARY. Their eyes meet and convey the pain and sorrow each is going through. RUFUS turns back to the chanting teens.

TEENS

Fight! Fight! Fight!

MARY takes a cell phone out of her pocket and calls 911.

ZACH

(Waving a bottle)

You want this? You gotta fight for it!

RUFUS picks up a nearby two by four piece of lumber and staggers to DONNIE. DONNIE is spitting up blood profusely. He turns to look at RUFUS, his eyes begging RUFUS to end his suffering. RUFUS raises the club and brings it down full force onto DONNIE. It is followed by multiple violent swings. DONNIE WHIMPERS, followed by the CRACKING sound of a leg bone.

ZACH

Fuck him up Rufus!

MIKE

Shit! He's gonna kill the bum.

After RUFUS has silenced DONNIE he grabs a clear piece of plastic and drops to his knees at DONNIE'S head. He wraps the plastic around DONNIE'S face and holds it so he can no longer breathe. DONNIE'S body jerks and strains until it moves no more and RUFUS removes the plastic.

He can now claim his prize. His eyes fixed on the bottle; RUFUS takes it from the stunned ZACH. RUFUS takes one last swallow and then pours the remainder over his head. With the camera still rolling RUFUS reaches into his pocket and pulls out the cigarette lighter he took from the bum on the train. Holding it out, he clicks the flame on and then deliberately sets himself on fire.

MARY

(Screams in terror)

Rufus! No!

She runs to RUFUS but is cut off by MIKE who grabs her.

MIKE

We're filming, bitch.

A moment later sirens and flashing lights flood the scene. Paramedics rush to the aid of RUFUS and DONNIE.

CUT TO:

INT. A HOSPITAL'S INTENSIVE CARE UNIT - DAY

RUFUS lies unconscious in a hospital bed. Various machines monitor his vital signs. His face is swollen, bruised and partially wrapped even though a number of days have elapsed.

MARY is at his bedside. A slight stirring raises her attention level and she takes his hand. RUFUS struggles to open his eyes. Upon seeing MARY, tears begin to roll down his face. With all the resolve he can muster, he only speaks one word.

RUFUS

Donnie?

MARY smiles and comforts him.

MARY

He's going to live. You hurt him pretty bad. He's been bleeding internally, but the doctors say he'll pull through...The police arrested those film makers. They

(MORE)

MARY (CONT'D)

know you were coerced into those fights. Rufus, the only way to put an end to the bum fights is to press charges...They need you, everybody needs you, I need you.

RUFUS (V.O.)

There comes a moment in the life of every man when he reaches his highest point...This was mine...Those might sound like strange words coming from a man who's body lay burnt and broken, but for the first time in my life...I was needed.

Could be Pastor Jim was right. Maybe God did have a plan for me after all. Seems that sometimes a man has to be knocked down so low that the only place he can see is up. I finally decided to look up and there was God, waitin for me with open arms...I could swear he was wearin a party hat too.

INT. A HOSPITAL'S INTENSIVE CARE UNIT - NIGHT

RUFUS fights several instances of withdrawal. He drips from cold sweat as he thrashes.

RUFUS (CONT) (V.O.)

...Don't get the idea that all my problems magically disappeared...Just the opposite...I still had to deal with them, but now I had an inner strength...

INT. AN AA MEETING ROOM - DAY

Mary holds RUFUS' hand and sits by his side as a circle of recovering alcoholics tell their story. RUFUS stands to tell his.

RUFUS (CONT) (V.O.)

I also had real friends . The kind
that don't leave you after the
booze runs out...

INT. LOAVES AND FISHES CENTER - DAY

DONNIE is shown happily dishing out meals to the line of
homeless. He is wearing an apron and chef's hat. He makes
sure JOE has an extra mountain of bacon, to JOE'S delight.
DONNIE takes a piece of bacon and throws it to a dog that
has been waiting patiently at his feet.

RUFUS (CONT) (V.O.)

Donnie came through too. He got
himself a job and a new group of
friends...Even got himself a new
dog..

INT. A COURTHOUSE - DAY

RUFUS is being questioned on the stand at a trial. He
points to the defendants, RYAN, ZACH, and MIKE.

RUFUS (CONT) (V.O.)

The police arrested the teens and
filed charges. They did some time..
But even more important...That was
the end of the bum fight videos.

INT. A COLLEGE AUDITORIUM - DAY

RUFUS stands on stage behind a microphone and podium. He is
addressing a packed house of students and faculty.

RUFUS (CONT) (V.O.)

I went back to school, but this
time I was the teacher. A lot of
those college kids were the ones
who laughed and cheered me on in
the videos. Now they watched and
listened to the extremely human,
remorseful, imperfect man who
stood in front of them..

INT. AN AWARDS BANQUET - NIGHT

RUFUS is wearing a suit and tie. He climbs several steps to a stage where a number of dignitaries prepare to honor him with a plaque. Each seat at every table is vacated to give RUFUS a standing ovation. Notably in the crowd are MARY and BARRY.

RUFUS (CONT) (V.O.)

Barry had some friends in politics. After they heard my story they wanted my help in passing the Rufus Hannah Act...A bill to make assaults on the homeless an official hate crime. This was my chance to turn the BUM DEAL that life had given me into something positive.

RUFUS is handed a plaque. Rapid fires of flashbulbs ignite as dignitaries posture to have their picture taken with him. RUFUS holds the plaque. He purposely places both hands side by side on top so as to reveal the indelible inscription, BUMFIGHT.

RUFUS (CONT) (V.O.)

Legislation would be hard... Staying sober would be hard...Hell, life is hard...Everything would be a fight, but one thing is for sure... This bum knows how to fight.

The camera closes in for a shot of RUFUS' knuckles and freeze frames on the word BUMFIGHT.

THE END

