THIEVES

FADE IN:

INT. APARTMENT LIVING ROOM - DAY

A total bachelor pad -- in fact, they created the phrase after seeing this very place. In serious need of a woman's touch. The main focal point here is the sofa -- the nicest piece of furniture in the room.

On the coffee table: two blank note pads and two capped pens.

Sitting on the sofa are two MEN. The first is TOBY. He's mid-twenties, sharp looking and wearing his best suit, which isn't saying much. This is his place.

The other fellow is CLARK. Toby's wing man. Also mid-twenties, unkempt, spacey and unable to sit still for more than a minute. This was his idea.

Toby glances down at his watch, stressed --

TOBY
Dude's already late.

CLARK
He'll be here.

TOBY
I'm still not thrilled you agreed let him use my apartment to put on this little seminar.

CLARK
Dude, this was your idea.

TOBY
No, my idea was to just...do it. You came up with the plan of hiring an expert.

CLARK
He'll be here. Trust me.

TOBY
He better be.

CLARK
What was I supposed to do? Use my place?
TOBY
You don't have a "place"...
   (uses hand quotes)
You live with your grandmother.

CLARK
(snaps back)
I live in the basement, Okay? The ENTIRE basement. Show a little respect.

TOBY
(unimpressed)
Sorry. My bad.

Awkward silence. Nothing happening. Boredom. Finally --

CLARK
You got anything to eat in here?

TOBY
Sorry, I didn't know I was responisble for bringing snacks.

CLARK
When I called you earlier and you didn't answer, that call was about having refreshments available for the group.

Silence again. Waiting. Clark can't resist --

CLARK
Well, do you mind if I just go look and see if you have anything to eat --

TOBY
(expecting this)
-- just go.

Clark pops off the couch and heads for the kitchen. Toby checks his watch again -- growing more frustrated.

TOBY
(yells O.S.)
Twenty minutes!

CLARK (O.S.)
What?
TOBY
He's twenty minutes late. I thought you said this guy was a professional!

CLARK (O.S.)
(ignores him)
Dude, you're tapped. All you have is Ho-Ho's and orange juice.

TOBY
(to himself)
Try getting a job and buy your own damn food...

Clark reappears in the living room, carrying a quart of half-empty O.J. and a single Ho-Ho. He forces the whole thing in his mouth and washes it down with a ten second swig of the juice. BURPS. Satisfied.

Toby shoots him a look of disgust.

CLARK
What?

TOBY
Nothing. Look, if this guy's not here the next two minutes I'm gonna hit the shower --

CLARK
(interrupts)
-- wait!

Clark is flaring his nostrils. Sniffing. Several times. He smells something. Something foul.

TOBY
What? Why are you doing that?

CLARK
Do you smell that?

Now he's got Toby sniffing.

TOBY
No. What?

CLARK
Smells like... dude, did someone leave a Lincoln log in your john?
TOBY
(offended)
I've been at work all day. No one's been in here for hours.

They exchange a puzzled look. Then, just like that -- right on cue -- a TOILET FLUSHES.

Toby jumps to his feet -- the fear of having a stranger in your home. Clark drops the juice and clutches his fists tight, ready to rumble.

TOBY
(worried)
Dude...

CLARK
(whispers)
No mercy!

TOBY
What if it's a --

CLARK
Two knuckles...right to the throat.

TOBY
How do you know that?

CLARK
I saw it on Cops. Fort Worth.

TOBY
They always film in Fort Worth...

They're interrupted by — a figure emerging from the back. His name is JASPER CRINDLEHOOD. An ex-thief. He looks like he's been around the block...twice. He wears a hoodie underneath his ten dollar Goodwill suit. No tie. A bag of Cheetos in his hand. He's quirky and strange -- Christopher Walken strange.

JASPER CRINDLEHOOD
I believe you gentlemen are awaiting my arrival?

CLARK
How did you get in here?

JASPER CRINDLEHOOD
I'm a thief.
(pause)
And you left the fire escape
(MORE)
JASPER CRINDLEHOOD (cont'd)
window cracked.

TOBY
Who the hell are you?

JASPER CRINDLEHOOD
Allow me to introduce myself. I am
the man of the hour. The coup de
grace. The Count of Monte
Cristo... but you can call me
Jasper.

Toby and Clark still don't get it. Jasper puts down the bad
of Cheetos --

JASPER CRINDLEHOOD
I'm here to put on the damn
seminar, take a seat please.

TOBY
Oh. I see.

JASPER CRINDLEHOOD
Please, sit.

They sit back down.

CLARK
(still sniffing)
Dude, what did you eat?

JASPER CRINDLEHOOD
Gefilte Fish. It never sits right.
By the way, you're out of toilet
paper, Febreeze bathroom spray,
and soap.

TOBY
(confused by that
last one)
Soap?

JASPER CRINDLEHOOD
Believe me, you don't wanna know.

Jasper CLEARS his throat. Like he's gearing up for an Oscar
speech. Begins --
JASPER CRINDLEHOOD
I'm here today, not only because you so graciously asked me to come into your lovely home, but also to teach you the ways of the snatch.

Clark grins, his mind in the gutter. Toby is lost --

TOBY
I'm sorry, snatch?

JASPER CRINDLEHOOD
K-mart...

TOBY
K-mart?

JASPER CRINDLEHOOD
Scrilla...

TOBY
Scrilla?

JASPER CRINDLEHOOD
A Chester charge?

TOBY
Chester?

JASPER CRINDLEHOOD
Okay, this is getting us nowhere, you're obviously not up to snuff in your street terms. I'm here because your slightly retarded friend told me you wanna rob a liquor store and you don't know where to start.

CLARK
Yep, that's us.

TOBY
It's not that we don't know how...we just need some direction.

JASPER CRINDLEHOOD
Are you familiar with the Heist of 1999?

TOBY
I'm sorry, the what?
JASPER CRINGLEHOOD
The Cringlehood credit scam?

TOBY
Again, I don't know what you're talking about...

JASPER CRINGLEHOOD
How about Japerpalloooza?

TOBY
Nope.

Jasper flings his arms back in disgust. The look of "how dare you!"

CLARK
Are those jobs you've pulled?

JASPER CRINGLEHOOD
Jobs? More like works of art. And you can do the same if you follow my three simple rules.

Toby and Clark perk up -- all ears. Jasper continues --

JASPER CRINGLEHOOD
Number one... you always need a good alibi.

CLARK
What's that?

TOBY
It's the defense by an accused person of having been elsewhere at the time an alleged offense was committed.

JASPER CRINGLEHOOD
Ten points for Carmen Sandiego here. It's basically an excuse. Now, do you have girlfriends?

TOBY
Girlfriends, why?

JASPER CRINGLEHOOD
I take that to be a no. The reason I asked is because girlfriends make the best alibis.

(pauses)
Could you be gay?
TOBY

What?

CLARK
(no hesitation)

How much?

Toby glances over at Clark -- bewildered.

TOBY

Dude?

CLARK

I'm not saying, I'm just saying.

JASPER CRINDLEHOOD

Relax. Not with each other, although I can totally see it, I mean separately...can you act homosexual?

TOBY

I guess so.

JASPER CRINDLEHOOD

Good. Then if anyone asks, you make up a story claiming that you were south of the border at a small bar called Swinging Richards, looking for a good time without the worries of transmitting pesky venereal desease...got it?

CLARK

(amazed)

You are good.

JASPER CRINDLEHOOD

Number two... you need a disguise.

TOBY

Like a mask?

JASPER CRINDLEHOOD

Precisely. What did you have in mind?

CLARK

(offers)

The dude from scream.
JASPER CRINGLEHOOD
Too common. And personally, I find it slightly erotic.

TOBY
Richard Nixon.

JASPER CRINGLEHOOD
Never use an ex-president. That's just rude.

CLARK
That oldest lady from Golden Girls?

JASPER CRINGLEHOOD
Warmer. But I'm pretty certain that was a dude. I say, let's go with The King.

Toby and Clark are jotting down notes now, fully engaged.

TOBY
Why Elvis?

CLARK
Elvis is perfect. It's probably better to pick someone that's still alive.

JASPER CRINGLEHOOD
Gentlemen, please. I'm talking about the REAL king. The all seeing, all knowing, down right make you shit your pants King.

TOBY
(suspicious)
Who?

JASPER CRINGLEHOOD
(proud of himself)
The Burger King.

Toby sits back, unimpressed, losing faith in Jasper by the minute.

CLARK
That creepy dude from the commercials?
JASPER CRINDLEHOOD
Yes! He's creepy as hell! He
sneaks up on you all hours of the
morning, offers you a plethora of
delicious hamburgers, and best of
all...he's royalty. There's
nothing scarier than a royal
leader that knows his beef.
Remember, he has it, HIS way.

Toby is not buying it --

TOBY
Wait a minute, you want us to
pretend to be gay and go in there
dressed up as the Burger King? Are
you be serious?

JASPER CRINDLEHOOD
As a heart attack. And I would
know, I've had three...

CLARK
(eager)
What's rule number three?

JASPER CRINDLEHOOD
Rule number three, is choose your
weapons carefully.

TOBY
Oh, we're not using weapons --

CLARK
-- we haven't discussed that yet.

JASPER CRINDLEHOOD
Choose wisely.

TOBY
It's out of the question. No
weapons. We wouldn't even know
where to look.

CLARK
I do.

JASPER CRINDLEHOOD
(to Toby)
He does...

Jasper bends down and lifts the now mostly empty quart of
orange juice, needing a drink.
CLARK
What do you mean, choose wisely?

JASPER CRINGLEHOOD
Arm yourselves for the occasion. A sawed off shotgun fired into a room full of people can kill everyone in the room. Very messy.

TOBY
And how do you know this?

JASPER CRINGLEHOOD
The Discovery Channel, after hours. I have trouble getting to sleep, must be all the Extenz.

Clark and Toby stare at one another. Having been taken on an emotional roller coaster. Exhausted.

TOBY
No what?

JASPER CRINGLEHOOD
Now, you steal.

TOBY
Right now?

JASPER CRINGLEHOOD
Right now.

Clark stands up, psyched out of his mind.

CLARK
Let's do this! Let's get paid son! Snatch, K-mart, Scrilla... all that shit! Let's do this!

JASPER CRINGLEHOOD
Don't forget Chester...

CLARK
Chester too. I'll do a Chester, I don't even care right now. I'm in the zone baby!

JASPER CRINGLEHOOD
(excited)
That's the spirit!
Toby stands up as well, watching Jasper and Clark chest bump. Leaving Jasper coughing, gasping for air. Toby has somehow been convinced --

TOBY
Alright, let's do it. Let's go for it.

Toby and Clark head for the door, Jasper following them. The two men stop before heading out --

TOBY
Aren't you coming?

JASPER CRINDLEHOOD
My stealing days are over. Besides, that fish is coming back up... I'll be in the restroom, waiting for your return.

TOBY
Just don't break anything.

CLARK
Thank you, my master.

JASPER CRINDLEHOOD
Be strong my young apprentices, for my butt cheeks will be securely planted to your ivory toilet seat.

Toby and Clark head down the hall -- out of sight. Jasper in the doorway, wishing them luck --

JASPER CRINDLEHOOD
(yells to them)
Remember you're training! You're gay, the Burger King, and sawed off shotgun!

Jasper SLAMS the door, his hand on his ailing stomach.
TIME CUT

Hours later. The living room is dark. The front door opens -- lights flip on to reveal --

Toby and Clark have been beat up. Black eyes -- looking like they took a good licking. Dried blood on their shirts.

What's worse -- the apartment is completely empty, everything gone, the sofa, the bag of Cheetos, even the note pads have been lifted. Nothing left.

The two friends look dejected. They've been had --

    TOBY
    That sunuvabitch!

    CLARK
    He is good...

The End