

Scenario by DAVID ARRATE

Chastity "Titty" Garfield + Freddy Burtis in
"I Am A Rock"



Illustrations by ENIO ACOSTA

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I Am A Rock
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FRIDAY

It's an early-21st century, summer afternoon. Traffic, for the most part, is moving smoothly alongside the pickup and drop off areas at Miami International Airport. Just overhead and behind the windows to the Skyride Connector (the moving walkway connecting the terminal complex to the parking garage) are young cousins ARDIE and CHASTITY. (Not particularly fond of her given name, she prefers to be called "TITTY".) With their reunion concluding eight years of separation, both are clearly delighted to be in one another's company; she's especially openly affectionate with him, and tends to play a bit rough. Titty is nearly 21, making her Ardie's senior by two years (based upon what he says), despite that he appears no older than 12. No one seems to question this, though; even when he pays the parking fare and drives away in an old, yellow Honda CRX.

Westbound on State Road 836, adjacent to the airfield, Titty kicks off her sandals to sit cross-legged in her seat; she fiddles with her right earlobe while conversing with Ardie. Although she's not presently interested in seeking any higher degree of education further than her GED, Titty enthusiastically inquires into what he's planning on studying when he's done with all the required classes; as he will be starting college next semester. Ardie (habitually reserved but kindly mannered) admits that he's unsure as of yet, but that he is being encouraged (by an undisclosed party) to consider business and economics. Nevertheless, he adds that he's looking forward to learning "something useful".

Titty will be staying with Ardie and his mother until Wednesday, unable to financially afford taking more time off from work. Back in her hometown of

Mulgachaw, Tennessee, Titty works as a waitress in a popular restaurant. (She lives up there with her boyfriend, and not far away from her dad.) Her aunt (NAOMI) has a chalet south from here, in a Homestead suburb. Naomi is her mother FAWN's younger sister. Fawn is the black sheep of the family; a pathological liar suffering from persecutory delusions. Fawn was also the cause of Titty's becoming estranged from her relatives (including her father) throughout most of her teens. The "last straw" for Titty came upon discovering Fawn's concealment of the passing of her beloved grandmother; the lack of knowing which led to her being unable to attend Fawn's own mother's funeral.

* * *

Naomi (age 41) strongly embraces her only niece, who accepts her aunt's preference of "Chastity" and acknowledges that "you can't win 'em all." (Titty tends to call her Mimi.) As an emotional Naomi is driven to laughter by Titty's vivacious personality, Ardie quietly excuses himself and heads into the kitchen to collect a gift-wrapped box. He idles a moment, appearing to be waiting for something, while listening with half an ear to the conversation in the next room. Upon finally returning to the living room, Ardie hands Titty her present; offering it on behalf of himself and his mother. Unveiling what's inside, Titty's face lights up with excitement at finding a factory packaged, wrist-braced slingshot. (She's an avid collector of exotic, albeit affordable weapons, except for firearms. Her boyfriend won't tolerate the latter, as she's a bit clumsy.) Discovering a bag of ¼ inch steel balls provided beneath the weapon, Titty begins fidgeting with eagerness to play with her new toy. So Ardie, exchanging smiles with his mother,

says he's going to accompany Titty outside, and Naomi encourages them to have fun while she finishes preparing dinner.

* * *

Crouched on the deck of the kids' old tree house, Titty fires down upon propped up recyclable items below; Ardie stands close by but behind her, and safely out of harm's way. When candidly inquiring into his sex life, only to find it nonexistent, Titty pledges to be of assistance by chasing out what she assumes is a dormant self-esteem, during her stay. Ardie, remaining quiet while attentively listening, appears puppy-eyed to her during the subject. And so Pottymouth Titty pinches his cheeks and shakes him, as if he were a stuffed animal; she then tells him that he'll always be her "adorable little shit." He smiles with amusement, and simply chuckles.

When the humidity gets to be too much, she launches off the weather-beaten structure, holding onto the handlebars of a cable trolley attached to a neighboring, strong side branch. Ardie, on the other hand, opts for the ladder they had both used to climb.

* * *

With the dinner plates cleared off the table, Aunt Naomi serves her son and niece homemade, heavily-glazed cinnamon rolls, made, as she points out, from organic ingredients. She hopes to influence Titty's regular diet during her visit, and to have it rub-off on her boyfriend back home to ensure that she sustains it. Upon mentioning her beau, Titty withdraws her smartphone to share a few images.

These include a couple of shots taken of her black, pot-bellied pig (SMOKEY), as well as a favorite with both her and her boyfriend (FREDDY) posing in someone's backyard, during a Halloween costume party. Titty also shows her aunt and cousin a picture of FREDDY with long hair, which he had before she met him, and which she wants him to grow back, despite his job. (Freddy earns his living as a realtor. He also occasionally plays bass guitar with his friends in a local jam band. Freddy is 26.)

Drawing upon the topic of partners, Titty asks Naomi about her suitor of late: CAESAR. Her aunt tells her that she'll get to meet him in the morning, as they've all been invited to go for a ride aboard a friend's yacht, tomorrow. The topic of Caesar draws praises from Ardie, who says that the commodity trader/speculator has been a perfect gentleman to his mother. (It's divulged that he's also had quite a recent impact on their nutrition and food intake.) Naomi and Caesar have been dating for three months, and for the past couple of weeks he's been interacting with Ardie; acknowledging him as the man of the house, and encouraging an entrepreneurial future. Without completely articulating it, Ardie clearly sees Caesar as a father figure: an absent archetype throughout his youth, since his biological, petty thief father abandoned both him and his mother, at an early age.

Upon inquiring into Titty's father's wellbeing, Naomi hesitantly asks if she's heard from Fawn. Titty shrugs off the latter subject and states that she doesn't care, nor wants to know "where *Bambi's* run off to." As the hour grows late, the three of them retire upstairs to wash up before turning in. Titty is taking Ardie's room, as he has voluntarily decided to sleep on the living room sofa.

* * *

Ardie's bedroom feels as though it belongs to another residence; more precisely, its appearance resembles that of an old European castle's bedchamber. Although modest in size, the room is furnished with heavy, dark wooden articles; among which is a bookcase decorated with medium-sized, flame-shaped lighting fixtures symmetrically placed between shelves. Titty notices that the books vary on a wide range of topics and jokingly asks if he has a short attention span while admitting that she herself does. Ardie, however, finds too many subjects interest him. With no social life to mention, Ardie lives mostly vicariously through reading and online gaming. His friends from school have either moved away for college or just barely maintain contact; and when they do, it's mostly via emails addressed to several recipients for local events, which he refrains from attending.

Neatly stacked on his writing desk are a few CDs (with the Ginger Baker Trio's *Going Back Home* visibly on top) and a hardcover book (Napoleon Hill's *Think and Grow Rich*) all lent to him by Caesar, which reminds Titty that she's brought her cousin an MP3 compilation that Freddy made for him. But just as she's about to withdraw from browsing through his library to get it, Titty smiles and reminisces with Ardie over an old-time horror radio show she finds recordings of. (Titty recalls that some "dork kid" had turned her onto *Lights Out*, although she has forgotten his name. Her consequently having passed along a few cassettes to Ardie, long ago, resulted in his long-lasting appreciation for the program.) Recommending a favorite episode, he sets it aside for her to listen to for when she decides to go to bed.

As Ardie bids her goodnight to head downstairs, Titty asks that he stay awhile, so as to share in the listening experience. So he plays the CD, switches off the lights, and lies down on his bed, beside her. Sensitively aware of the sensation which she remembers greatly soothing Ardie—something they both greatly enjoyed receiving from their grandmother, when they were small children—Titty caresses, while lightly tickling his arms and face using her fingertips. Removing his shirt to lie on his stomach for her to continue over, Ardie blissfully smiles and mumbles that he must have been an Egyptian pharaoh’s cat in some prior life. Titty says she shares his belief in reincarnation, and claims to have been a monkey. Resuming in a low voice, Ardie mentions that China recently passed a law banning reincarnation without the government’s permission, in order to manage Tibet’s spiritual leaders. Upon his answering her inquiry regarding how many times the Dalai Lama has returned, she giggles.

TITTY: Dude, if the only plan he’s cooked up after fourteen lives is preachin’ peace and love, we’re screwed.

* * *

It’s just after 7 o’clock in the evening, up north in Mulgachaw, Tennessee. The décor of Titty and Freddy’s rented townhouse bedroom is one of bold Caribbean colors, with cranberry red painted walls. Sitting up with his back against the wooden bedpost and playing on an electrically amplified bass guitar is Freddy (hanging in a wooden frame above his head is a quad poster depicting a carousing trio of armed skeletons). Titty is showering in the master bathroom while their pet pig Smokey lingers by.

Having just arrived back from her trip, Freddy is taking her to a newly opened restaurant. It's dinnertime, and he's starved after a long and complicated work day. (Freddy's eating pattern is usually out of whack, due to his irregular working hours. And this is why whenever he does eat, he tends to overdo it.)

Freddy's groove—Johnny Pate's *Shaft in Africa (Addis)*, as a matter of fact—gets interrupted when his cell phone suddenly rings. Reacting with disapproval of the caller's ID, he hesitantly answers it. The caller is SHANE: an old childhood friend from Freddy's inner-circle, who's been outcasted from the group, due to recent drug abuse. As dreaded, Shane is a mouthful with tales of the crime-related losers that he now associates himself with, along with half-hearted appeals of encouragement to clean up his act.

FREDDY (*half-jokingly*): Your lies are old, white man. (*Freddy is actually half Cherokee.*)

Titty comes out of the bathroom with a towel wrapped around her waist, and Freddy quietly lets her know who the caller is. He also beckons her to come closer so that he can bite her. Titty hisses and bares her teeth, and they horse around, wrestling like two childish lovebirds while Shane rambles on. Finally, Titty snatches the phone from Freddy and manages to get rid of his old friend with a phony emergency situation.

TITTY (*feigning strained patience*): Shane! Hi, Shane. Listen, man, my water just broke, right now. *Okay?* Freddy has to take me to the hospital. He'll call you when the baby's out. ... *Okay?* Talk to you later. Bye, bye. (*Titty hangs up before addressing Freddy. She theatrically*

bounces his head off the mattress to emphasize her words, which he allows her to do.) Why does Buddha hafta pick up on every asshole?!

FREDDY (*singing*): *'Cause everybody's got a hungry heart! (He whines in jest.) Food! Feed me food! Holy shit!*

Titty chuckles and sits up on top of him.

TITTY: Baby, why do you pick up on him, when you know it's just gonna make him call you more?

FREDDY: 'Cause I don't like seeing people get kicked to the curb. (*Titty raises an eyebrow.*) Well, alright, unless they're pedophiles. Shane's got nobody else to talk to, Tee. Everybody else is pissed off at him. (*He starts playfully poking at her, which she deflects by swiping his hands away.*) And *now*, what do you want me to tell him *later*? When he finds out you weren't pregnant with my *baby*?

TITTY (*smiling, climbing off the bed*): Well, I can always get pregnant. Tsk, just tell him I had a miscarriage, or that I had some three-headed monster they had to put to sleep. Come on, man. I'll be ready like in three minutes. Quit your bitchin' and get your shit together.

* * *

Bandit Country is similar in theme to Epcot's Mexico pavilion interior, but on a smaller scale; childlike doll figures outfitted in clothing reflecting frightened peasants, menacing bandits, and a mix of merry and paranoid bourgeois are all

scattered about. *Me Voy Pa'l Pueblo* by Los Panchos can be heard coming through the overhead stereo system, as Titty and Freddy make their way through the crowded entrance. After failing to find one of their default pseudonyms (“Norwood”), which they tend to use when making reservations, the hostess finds another (“Roman”), and they avoid a major waiting list.

Titty and Freddy are taken to a section where two large projection screens are mounted up against opposite walls. Modern computer game-stylized animation displays the outskirts of a small town, where various characters—much in the spirit of the outfitted doll figures—go about their business. Shortly following their being seated, they are attended to by a cool, calm and collected young man wearing a band aid on his neck, who introduces himself as LESLIE. He takes their orders for drinks, along with the recommended “chef’s special” appetizer (“Bedoya’s Mexican pizza”), before offering them a choice of weapons.

LESLIE: *And* rifles or pistols?

Freddy and Titty request one of each, and are brought back two lightweight, wireless arcade guns. While occupying the game room, the patrons are encouraged to utilize their weapons against the bandits, whom sporadically appear to terrorize neighboring villagers, wealthy travelers, etc., up on the closest wall screen. Scores are kept on digital panels on the side of each gun, and high scoring points are awarded prizes, which include free items from the dessert menu, as well as discounts on return visits.

Freddy and Titty’s harmonious relationship becomes further elevated as the alcoholic beverages begin affecting their senses, while adding a more carefree

atmosphere. Titty has a present for him back home, which she had purchased during her visit to Aunt Naomi's. Freddy teases her with inquiries and she humors him, although Titty lets on to knowing perfectly well that he prefers surprises.

Before the arrival of their main dishes, Titty indiscreetly asks their server about his curious band aid. With brief hesitation, he reveals what appear to be two small and nasty puncture wounds. When she jokes about vampires, Leslie abandons his reserved behavior, and discloses what's been on his mind.

LESLIE (*smiling sarcastically*): Yeah, I wish I'd gotten bit by a vampire. Let me tell you, I'd be going around killing so many people—starting with my ex-girlfriend and her mother.

Titty's and Freddy's jaws drop, then both burst out laughing. Meanwhile, the cooks in the kitchen are being provided with additional cooking oil, contained in plastic squeeze bottles marked "SOY", before continuing on to the next orders.

* * *

Lying beside each other in bed while watching Freddy's movie present—an obscure, 1970s martial arts title, which he's long sought after—Titty playfully bites him. Freddy motions to bite her back hard and she lets out a short eek. Titty then taps him on the chin and he bares his teeth once more.

TITTY: I love you, Dildo. (*That's actually her pet name for him.*)

FREDDY (*growling*): Why?

TITTY (*thinking*): Because...you make my pussy gush.

FREDDY: *Ohhh! (He grins with pride, and then gives a bastardized imitation of W.C. Fields.) Well, then just let your love flow, like a mountain stream. Always happy to bust that beaver's dam, my little chuckling.*

TITTY *(giggling):* You fuckin' dork. *(Both of them crack up laughing until Freddy chokes and coughs.)* So how come you love me? I know Penis Mountain does. *(That's, well—)*

FREDDY: Well, since your answer was so detailed, I'll give you three reasons. One, you make me laugh. Two, you're cute and loony. And three... would *be*... you're fun to play with.

Following the obscene language, they discuss the next day's driving arrangement, with regards to the hour she begins work and the scheduling of his appointments. In a prelude to lovemaking, Freddy cuddles behind Titty and arouses her by kissing, licking, and sucking her earlobe. Greatly desiring him, she quietly takes his hand, spreads it open, and spins circles with her index finger on his palm.



SATURDAY

FAWN (age 43) switches off the car radio while Ardie's biological father, the muscular SYLVESTER (46), continues driving. (He has physically maintained himself fit thanks to the criminal justice system.) Fawn is nagging him, although he appears to be accustomed to it. She accuses Sylvester of being unable to do any one thing right, and much less when he tries to multitask.

FAWN: I need you to listen to what I'm telling you. It's got to be one of the next two exits coming up.

It's early in the morning, and Sylvester and Fawn are travelling south along the Turnpike, looking for the route to Naomi's. Unbeknownst to them, Caesar (age 44) is also on his way there. Driving up alongside them, he glances over at Fawn, who barely notices him, and speeds on ahead.

When they finally do pull up to Naomi's driveway, Caesar is sitting in his car, waiting for them. Stepping out of his vehicle stone-faced, and with an air of violence, he walks up to the driver's side door. Naturally, Sylvester lowers his window and asks him who the heck he is. So Caesar tells him, and lets them both know that as long as he is welcome here, they are not. Fawn begins overdramatically imploring him to allow her to see her daughter and nephew. Sylvester contributes his own phony wishes, though nobody seems to respect him. Caesar lets Fawn know that he's heard all about her.

CAESAR: There is nothing I hate more than a lousy actress.

Caesar ultimately encourages them to shoo when he withdraws a concealed handgun, but not before Sylvester—who is rather difficult to take seriously—lets him know that he's "going to go buy a gun, so that [he] can have one too."

Caesar taps on Naomi's kitchen window, where she's busy preparing breakfast, and uses sign language to tell her that she looks beautiful. Smiling, Naomi signs back that she dreamt of him. (Their silent conversation is subtitled.)

CAESAR: What was the dream about?

NAOMI: I was shaving your face beneath a full moon. You look handsome with a mustache.

Naomi lets Caesar in through the front door and, followed by a soft kiss, quietly asks him if he would like to eat something. Caesar, in turn, asks if she has carefully reviewed the ingredients in the products she's using, for contents he's told her to watch out for (none of which he presently names). His obsessiveness makes her smile, and, yes, the organic ingredients apparently satisfy his concerns. So Caesar agrees to have some blueberry-stuffed, buckwheat pancakes.

They are joined momentarily by Ardie and Titty; both of whom had been woken up earlier, expecting Caesar and his friend. Caesar shakes hands with Ardie—who appears very happy to see him—then with Titty. Naomi, standing in the kitchen, looks over at Caesar with a nervous smile as her niece introduces herself.

TITTY: My name's Chastity, but all my friend's call me Titty. You can call me whichever one you want, though.

Caesar smiles and stifles a laugh, as he's slightly taken aback.

CAESAR: Well, the second one is definitely original. But they mean two different things. One nourishes the young while the other (*He shrugs.*) helps no one.

TITTY (*eyes widening with approval*): *Hey.* You see? Now I've got one more reason to hate my damn name. I'm gonna start usin' that.

CAESAR: Oh, I'm glad. And if that's what you prefer, then it's nice to meet you, Titty.

Just as Caesar begins pouring maple syrup on his pancakes, the doorbell rings, and Naomi leaves to answer it. Having met him once before, Naomi welcomes in a business acquaintance and friend of Caesar's named TONY (age 54). (It's Tony's small yacht they're all sailing out on, today.) Tony was supposed to show up with his wife, but it turns out that she decided against coming; as he discloses, they've been fighting "again". As Naomi brings Tony into the kitchen, she offers him a choice of either cream of millet or buckwheat pancakes.

TONY: No, thank you. Just some coffee. I had some Mexican food last night that didn't agree with my stomach, and what came out the other end nearly got me thrown out of the house. *(He smiles with embarrassment.)* Oh. Excuse me.

The sounds of giggling coming from Titty and Ardie draw Tony's attention towards the dining room table. Caesar, sitting beside them, shakes his head in disapproval at Tony's vulgarity, as Naomi's mouth hangs agape in a half-smile. In an attempt to cover up his blunder, Tony smiles at the friendly-looking kids and walks over to them while introducing himself.

TONY: My wife's looking for any excuse to get rid of me, and I wouldn't mind being happily divorced again, neither. But it's like all my cop friends say: "It's cheaper to keep her." I should have known it was doomed from the beginning.

* * *

A flashback shows Tony's first encounter with his wife-to-be (CLAIRE) while sitting beside her in a church, during a friend's wedding. Claire confesses to him, though not knowing him, that she detests these types of establishments. Tony smiles and confesses that he himself is an atheist, but that he finds religion an amusing and admirable instrument for acquiring power. He goes on to share his belief that it limits the imagination, and therefore a person's actions, which has benefitted only "rulers and merchants".

TONY: How many of these people walk out of here treating life like a waiting room for death? It's brilliant, when you come to think about it. I mean, if all men were pharaohs, who would build their pyramids?

Claire is enticed by Tony's wannabe elitist reasoning, and inquires into his profession, along with his marriage status. Tony replies that he is "happily divorced" and that he's recently turned over a new leaf by just having entered into a private investment firm.

* * *

Back in Naomi's dining room—

TITTY: Why'd ya get married?

TONY: When you're young, you tend to overlook the repercussions.

Caesar reminds Tony that he first met his wife less than ten years ago. Tony, however, muses on about how he could have been a millionaire by now. The

mentioning of which raises a question from Ardie, regarding how there can be so many millionaires in China despite it being a communist country. At that moment, Naomi receives an unknown phone caller, which, upon answering, draws her to leave the room while an eager Tony hesitantly permits Caesar to respond to Ardie's question. Titty is sending a text message to Freddy and not really paying attention to them; but when Naomi returns, Ardie and Titty are both expressing their understanding of Caesar's (unfilmed) explanation. Tony adds in his opinion that more than half the world's woes would vanish overnight if religion and nationalism were done away with.

TONY: Wouldn't it be easier to replace one single corrupt body of government, rather than a hundred of them? Think about it now, how many countries are there?

As Titty and Ardie withdraw their smartphones in a race to find the answer, Naomi relays some bad news. Unfortunately, she'll be unable to join them until later on in the afternoon, due to somewhat of an emergency at work, at the county manager's office.

* * *

Since no one wants to go out on Tony's boat without Naomi, the two men head towards the Everglades to take "the kids" airboating. "Thanks" to a conversation on Ardie's lack of female companionship, brought up rather loudly by Titty—who determines that he's too shy—Tony and Caesar have them swear not to say anything about going to practice shooting, instead. Prompted by her long, soon-to-be fulfilled desire of being trusted enough to handle a firearm, Titty begins

texting her aunt that she should marry Caesar. When Caesar questions Ardie what he planned on doing with his cousin during her stay, Titty interjects that they were going to catch a “crazy show” at the recently renovated Seminole Theater in downtown Homestead. Caesar expresses his disappointment in Ardie; he mistakes “show” for a movie, and takes to criticizing the venue.

CAESAR: Haven’t you noticed that it’s usually the place for men, who have nothing to say, to take a woman out on a first date? Do you know why that is? Because you can’t interact with someone during a movie. I hate movies. You can’t develop social skills in a place like that.

Tony frowns, unsure about his friend’s comments. Caesar assures Ardie that he’s going to set him straight while Ardie sits quietly, listening attentively. Titty immediately deletes her text, utterly disagreeing with Caesar, although neither she nor Ardie mentions that they meant to see a theatrical performance. Never one to bite her tongue, she lets it be known that she and Freddy “watch funny and weird-ass shit all the time.” Caesar shrugs, unshaken.

* * *

Out in the boondocks, Titty all but drools over Tony’s FN SCAR-H assault rifle, which he removes from his trunk for display; and he nods his head, sharing her approval. The kids hurriedly set up targets with Caesar on the dirt road, and then are each handed a pair of ear muffs by Tony; he and Caesar use extra ear plugs for their own protection. The adults first teach them how to shoot by using Caesar’s FN Five-seven pistol. After some trial and error, Titty finally hits the intended target and proclaims herself “Le sou-pair kil-air.”¹ Tony corrects her with the

proper French (*“Le tueur super”*), but she doesn’t pay him any attention, as it’s now her turn with his SCAR.

While Titty foolhardily shoots down a rare species of bird in the heat of the moment, Tony and Caesar both attend to phone calls regarding a group of Chinese investors, who have just arrived in town. As both men had anticipated, these businessmen are paying a surprise visit to the head of Tony’s firm, with intentions of presenting a buyout proposal. Tony and Caesar realize that they’ll have to drop the kids back off at Naomi’s, in order to encourage the secretly profitable transaction in person.

The mutilated bird has ended Titty’s gun enthusiasm, along with her wishes to see a theatrical show. Unsure as to how to lift her spirit back up, Ardie suggests that they go see a horror film instead.

* * *

Instead of going to work, Naomi has gone to meet Sylvester. She spots him sitting outside of a coffeehouse in a shopping center, as she drives past him while looking for a parking spot. Sylvester smiles, rising from his seat, as she approaches him; he even offers her a hug. Naomi, instead, slaps him hard across the face. Behind them, sitting inside the shop, Fawn is unable to make out what Naomi is saying, as Sylvester is barely able to get a sentence in without his ex-wife smacking him. When he tries to grab her wrists, she shoots pepper spray into his face, having it handily attached to her keychain. Naomi then kicks him in the groin, and Sylvester falls down, banging his head against the table. His ex-wife tells him that thanks to his abandoning her and Ardie, she’s had to play both the

roles of mother and father, and has long abandoned playing the helpless and weak, single mother. Spotting Fawn behind the shop's window, she gives her sister the finger. As Naomi leaves, a half-blinded and battered Sylvester lets her know that he fully intends to mace her back.

A passing blind man, accompanied by a guide dog and a young woman, asks Sylvester if he needs help pressing charges. The animal licks Sylvester's face, then suddenly growls and attacks him. Appearing unsure what to do, Fawn remains seated inside while Sylvester cries out for mercy.

* * *

Upon entering the multiplex, Titty notices Ardie's attention being drawn to an unhappy looking female ticket taker. When pressed, he simply comments that the young, short woman has a "sad face". Exaggerating a passing interest, Titty threatens him into making conversation with her while she stands in line at the concession stand. Ardie doesn't try to argue or talk himself out of it, so she proudly pats him on the back with a smile and tells him to "go get her." But whatever Ardie settles upon telling the ticket taker causes her to leave her station in a hurry. Titty only notices the young woman's sudden disappearance as she finishes placing her order for snacks and a soft drink. Finding Ardie patiently waiting for her at the empty station, Titty questions him as to her whereabouts.

ARDIE: Some kind of emergency. Although I think it might have been personal. But I got to talk to her, a little bit. Her name's Rebecca.

TITTY (*baffled*): Dude, what the hell happened? What'd you say to her? (*Titty raises the jumbo-sized soda, as she starts leading them towards their auditorium.*) Here, take this shit.

ARDIE: Not much really. I told her that whenever she has a rainy day to remember that she had inspired courage in somebody who recognized how pretty she was.

TITTY (*frowning*): Well, I've heard worse.

Seated in the center of the auditorium, waiting for the movie to begin, Titty and Ardie use her smartphone to try to plan out their next few days. While Titty scrolls down a webpage, Ardie gets distracted by two teenage girls wearing gym shorts, entering the theater. One is wearing a leg cast, with her bare toes exposed.

* * *

EMMANUEL's firm, where Tony is employed, holds a great deal of real estate investments; including several, previously public hospitals. His close and personal ties with a handful of county commissioners have helped position him to a desirable business advantage point. And it is due to some of these same channels—financially influenced by outside competitors—that his company has recently fallen into a great deal of debt. Having just been made aware of a wealthy Chinese business group coming to visit him (without his invitation), he agrees to meet them at his office. Someone bows when the Chinese make their entrance, and is humiliated when the translator tells him that he has mistaken

Japanese customs with theirs. Others have brought them bottles of expensive wine while some “cheapskate” named Harry presents them with a box of guava pastries and garners success, as the Chinese quickly devour them.

Emmanuel (a Cuban Jew, age 69) politely tells his visitors that he intends to get to the bottom of this; and he assures them that he will weed out those responsible for misleading them. One of the Chinese men drops him a tidbit of information, in an attempt to provide him with a lead.

CHINESE INVESTOR: They called you “Cuban Mafia”.

Upon seeing them out, Emmanuel screams down several protests raised by his staff, especially by their self-assumed leader: Tony. Emmanuel states that it is against his principles to give away what he helped create, especially to eastern foreigners. He informs them, instead, that they will be selling off some of their assets, to make up for their losses, with an interested party from Brazil.

EMMANUEL: *Y de todas maneras*, I despise communists! Who does not know what I and my brothers had to endure as political prisoners?!

Nearly everyone flings their hands up in despair, apparently having heard his stories too many times. Some German in the room can be heard whining.

UNKNOWN GERMAN (*German, subtitled*): Oh, no.

Emmanuel lets them all know that he is preparing to leave the country to visit Israel, and that he wishes to travel without having to listen to any further “fucking bullshit”. He then scolds Tony, and offers him the door; advising him to run his

own firm, if he so wishes for his demands to be followed. Caesar, who is a close acquaintance of Emmanuel's—and who is quietly pushing for the Chinese acquisition—remains behind, solely in the older man's company.

EMMANUEL (*shaking his head*): Men who think too much are no good for business. I hope you haven't allowed that idiot to pollute your mind, too.

CAESAR: No. You and I both see how things grow, and how they crumble when people want to move too fast.

EMMANUEL: You mean when the little people get greedy.

CAESAR: We only need to earn enough to do as we please. And I never allow my ambitions to cloud my reasoning.

With the support of a few other associates and a mystery party phoning in during a private meeting, Tony enters into a financial arrangement for “compromising” Emmanuel, with the help of “an outside contractor”.

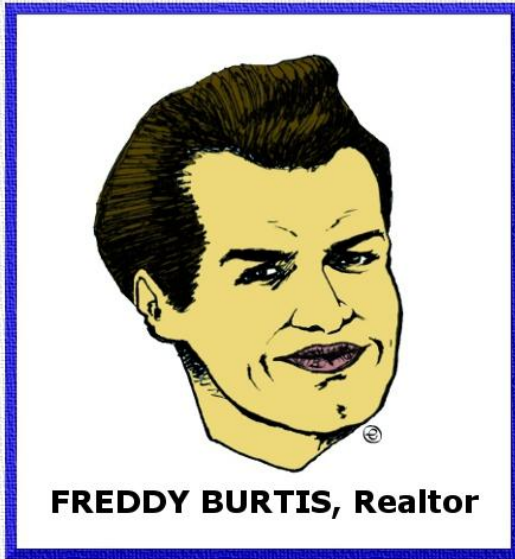
* * *

Titty and Ardie find Naomi back at home; she's only just arrived with some mangoes, which she cuts up and eats with them. Naomi appears cheery and her usual self, and asks how their day went. As Titty explains it, minutes after their movie started, the building caught on fire. Deciding to linger outside the theater to find out what had happened, it turns out that the ticket taker had been the culprit; but due to the young woman being quickly rushed away in an ambulance,

no one could gather the motive. Titty confesses to Naomi about having obligated Ardie to “hit on her” before it happened. She then advises him not to feel guilty about having spoken with “that crazy retard.”

When Titty begins handling the cover up of their shooting party, Ardie nonchalantly interjects, and takes over the telling of their prefabricated yarn. This takes her aback. She smiles proudly at her cousin’s assertive behavior, but then quietly feels conflicted about their dishonesty (her facial expressions are easy enough to read).

Both cousins decide upon staying in for the rest of the evening to play excessively violent videogames. Having plenty of time to prepare dinner, Naomi sits with them in the living room and struggles to give her ticklish niece a French pedicure.



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SUNDAY

Having obtained an uncrowded spot not far from the shoreline, Naomi appears peaceably settled in with her e-book reader. She's accompanied her son and niece to South Beach, as they've come to enjoy parasailing and jet skiing.

While Titty and Ardie wait their turns for the former, along with three other young people, a mangy dog passes by. Inspired, or perhaps simply bored, Titty wonders aloud if perhaps everything in the universe isn't just a tiny "speck" on a great, "big, stupid animal". Her comments seize the attention of a geeky-looking high schooler, who has been staring at her; he looks as if he's been contemplating how to approach her. He all too eagerly seizes the moment and relays that perhaps in the present century, thanks to two competing particle accelerators, a new scientifically supported explanation regarding the origin of the universe may be on the way. The topic rather intrigues Titty, and he continues that such

information would change the way people think and act, in relation to their place in the cosmos. With barely any scientific education, and thus resorting to thinking like a sexual pervert, she asks if two things would have had to collide in order to cause the Big Bang. The young man looks thrilled to be sharing his knowledge with her, as well as to have gained her attention.

SCIENCE GEEK: That's actually part of what's known as M-theory.

He goes on to explain about the multidimensional objects (known as membranes) that are theorized to have caused the collision, which Titty had assumed. The "nerd bomber world champion" blows it, though, when he asks Titty about her availability, just as Ardie steps away to use the restroom.

SCIENCE GEEK: Is he your boyfriend?

TITTY (*still friendly*): Nah, he's my cousin.

SCIENCE GEEK: So, uh, what are you doing later on today?

TITTY (*changing smiles*): Well, you know that gay pride parade that's supposed to be coming by, a couple blocks from here?

SCIENCE GEEK (*frowning*): Uh, no. Not really.

TITTY (*stepping closer*): We're gonna be marchin' and partyin' with all 'em later. You see, I'm transgender. And my cousin, well, he's gay as all hell. You know, a smart kid like you might discover a whole new set of ideas with that open mind of yours. (*The Science Geek slowly begins retreating.*) You wanna come with? (*She pinches his butt.*)

SCIENCE GEEK (*looking for an escape route*): Oh, no thanks. I'm not that open-minded, anyway. In fact, I'm the only Republican in my class.

TITTY (*trailing beside him*): No wonder you got such a cute ass! Hey, I'm a Libertarian. I thought ya'll liked us?

SCIENCE GEEK: No, no, no!

Catching Ardie coming out of the men's bathroom, the Science Geek excuses himself. When Titty offers to accompany him in to share a urinal, he switches gears—he pretends to receive a text message from his parents, notifying him to meet them elsewhere. Sharing a laugh with the two other (actually gay) young women that have been waiting around with them, Titty asks Ardie what the difference is between Republicans and Libertarians.

TITTY: Ah, you know what, man? I don't really want to know. If it's like Caesar says it is, then it's nothin' but a puppet show.

* * *

Naomi is quietly napping while lying upon her stomach when Sylvester swaggers by and sits down beside her. He leans over as if to whisper in her ear and mouths something. He then nonchalantly digs through the duffle bag beside her and withdraws a small, travel-sized wallet. Quietly saying that he'll return (for dramatic purposes?), Sylvester slowly gets up and heads towards Fawn; his sister-in-law is standing a safe distance away on the sidewalk, behind a stone wall. Smiling, he childishly tosses the wallet up in the air to catch it.

SYLVESTER: Sushi?

She fails to return the smile, but succeeds in seizing the wallet.

* * *

Caesar has agreed to meet Tony at an Irish pub in the neighborhood of Brickell. He declines ordering from the menu and opts for a dry martini, instead. Tony, on the other hand, gorges on a salmon burger and shoestring fries, relishing what he believes to be one of the last occasions in which he will be eating “amongst the peasants.” Tony’s expecting a major kickback upon the Chinese acquisition. He’s been reading up on Dubai and Singapore, as those seem the two most appealing destinations for living out the rest of his life. While Caesar also stands to benefit—though neither one discloses any details in public—he remains reserved. Tony remarks on his friend’s lack of shared enthusiasm; he points out that Caesar has already tasted a certain degree of wealth by having invested in a giant agribusiness company, years earlier, in India. Caesar, staring with piercing eyes, reminds Tony never to mention that in front of Naomi and her son. Tony simply nods, waving it off, and tells him that he need not worry about that. As Caesar’s drink finally arrives, Tony raises his own to propose a toast: “to all the upcoming retirement parties.”

* * *

Emmanuel’s plane has just landed safely at Ben Gurion International Airport. While his and his wife’s passports and baggage are being checked appropriately, a fellow arriver spots an Arab woman smoking a cigarette. She rigidly greets the

man, who upon greeting her in return subtly gestures towards Emmanuel. Withdrawing her cell phone, she phones another man, who is looking out over a busy street from the balcony of an apartment. She tells him that she needs a taxi. This second man, in turn, passes the news of “the Jew’s” arrival along to two teenagers, occupying the same flat. One of the teens displays several crudely made explosives to his elder while the other boy expertly oils and polishes an AK-47.

* * *

Identity thieves Sylvester and Fawn are seated outside of a restaurant on Ocean Drive, consuming warm sake with sushi. Sylvester appears quite pleased with himself, while “Bambi” is busy brooding over her daughter’s affection for Naomi; “despite every story” Fawn’s ever told her about her aunt (not to mention those concerning the rest of the family). Sylvester fails to get—or more precisely, doesn’t care to see—the big picture; for Fawn, anyway. Fawn is convinced (or wishes to believe) that she’s helpless without others to support her, and that those who do not help her are intentionally trying to hurt her.

When their server comes to collect their bill and credit payment, Sylvester happens to place Naomi’s card with the backside facing up (failing to notice Naomi’s picture ID). The server, however, notices the photo and returns to their table. He asks them who the card belongs to, and Sylvester tells him that it belongs to his wife. So the server then asks who the woman sitting beside him is, and Sylvester responds that Fawn is his sister-in-law. When the server demands to see some form of ID, Fawn begins screaming hysterically about all the years of

suffering she's had to endure because of her spoiled sister: the "conniving slut" who has been "spreading lies to everybody about [her]."

A flashback to the day when newborn Naomi was brought home from the hospital shows her being presented to her older sister for the first time. Fawn, barely two years old, quietly goes into the bathroom, removes the toilet paper off its holder, and returns with the bar to club her baby sister.

Becoming outcasted by everyone, including her only child, Fawn further claims that Naomi even destroyed her husband Sylvester's life, when she became jealous over their son's siding with him over trivialities.

FAWN (*crying*): She even slept with my husband! (*She maniacally gestures towards Sylvester.*) And his first wife!

The server is deeply moved. He begs her to calm down, and hands her a napkin to dry her eyes and runny nose.

SERVER: Don't worry, ma'am. I'll make sure this woman pays for your sushi. I'll put my tip on there, too.

Their waiter leaves again to charge Naomi's card while Sylvester stifles a laugh. Fawn raises a finger, warning him to keep quiet.

* * *

Having snacked throughout the day while at the beach, Naomi, Ardie, and Titty conclude that they need a real meal; and Titty's sudden craving for oysters sets them off towards a seafood bistro, for an early-evening dinner. A sudden, casual

call from Caesar leads to Ardie's suggesting their inviting him to join them. Naomi hesitates, not having showered or changed clothes; but at the mentioning of Caesar's being nearby, she becomes persuaded to do so. Caesar gratefully accepts, but becomes alarmed by the name of the restaurant. He says nothing to discourage them from going, however. Instead, he stops off at a market to pick up a bottle of organic olive oil, in addition to some cocktail sauce. Upon meeting Naomi and the kids there, he passes the bottle along to the head cook to use exclusively for their dishes (minus Titty's raw oysters); he even slips the man a few bills. When the cook gives Caesar a puzzled look, while admitting to be using cheap cooking material to save expenses, Caesar simply tells him that someone in his party has allergies.

* * *

Finding one of the restroom stalls occupied, and deciding against using the handicap's toilet, Ardie takes to using the closest urinal wall mount. Just as he begins to relieve himself, the bathroom door swings open and Titty walks up to the urinal beside him.

TITTY: Hey, cuz. How's it hangin'?

Ardie nearly pees on himself, having been taken completely by surprise. Titty steps back to grant him some privacy while she giggles.

ARDIE: What are you doing in here?! Are you crazy?!

Another female—the occupant inside the stall—begins to laugh. Titty explains that the men's lavatory has been designated a unisex restroom, due to a pending

police investigation, which was conducted the prior day, inside the woman's john. According to one of the employees, a customer was a victim of spontaneous human combustion; although "it sounds like a lot of bullshit." An older woman (a waitress) steps out of the stall and promises not to look, just as Ardie zips himself up. She agrees with Titty while she washes her hands.

WAITRESS: She probably just set herself on fire, 'cause her girlfriend left her. Why anybody would wanna go out like that, man, who knows?

Titty tells her cousin that she's becoming bored while Caesar and Naomi are "getting hammered" on wine. She asks Ardie how he feels about leaving his mom in Caesar's care; noting that the adults appear to be having a good time together. Ardie seems as if he's going to reject her proposal, but then upon thinking it over, tells her that his mom *is* taking the day off from work tomorrow; he then asks Titty to check online to see if there are any musical events occurring tonight within the area, as he washes his hands. Having come with the intention of using the facility, she steps into the vacant stall while researching. Just outside of the restroom, Titty can be heard suddenly screaming.

Ardie and an overexcited Titty (frantically tapping away on her smartphone) return to their table and remain standing while he does all the talking. Ardie asks his mom if she wouldn't mind if they excuse themselves, as Titty just found out that one of her favorite bands reunited, released a new album, and is performing tonight a few miles away, within a couple of hours. Before Naomi is able to get a word out, Caesar eagerly interjects that he would be happy to drive her back home; and his proposal appears to have conveniently settled the matter.

ARDIE: Titty's been singing their songs ever since we were both little. She's never seen them live before, though.

CAESAR: So, what kind of music is it?

ARDIE: It's punk rock.

CAESAR (*disapprovingly*): Eh.

Sensing his cousin is considering physically assaulting his mother's boyfriend, Ardie leaves some money on the table (despite Caesar's protest) and takes Titty away. Upon being left alone with her, Caesar asks Naomi if he may refill her glass with some red wine. Smiling, she looks at her wristwatch and agrees to have one more.

Outside, Titty is blindly following her cousin back to his car. Ardie, however, notices her carelessness and slows his pace to walk beside her. Titty suddenly stops in her tracks, frowning.

TITTY: Aw, wait a minute.

ARDIE: What is it?

TITTY: *No.* No wonder there was a concert video. *Man*, this was back in March. And it wasn't even here, it was in Austin. Why the hell are they writing about it, then? Oh, this is old.

ARDIE: Well, at least you found out that they got back together. And now you got a new album to listen to when we get home.

TITTY: Tsk, screw that, man. I don't even care anymore. I wanted to go see them. Goddamn it. Miami sucks.

Back inside, Caesar confides in Naomi that—upon having reassessed his previous relationships—part of his attraction to her is that she is “non-competitive”, “uncomplicated”, “genuine”, and “simple”. She, in turn, confesses to having been appealed by his gentlemanly conduct, ever since the first day they met at her job (his appearance having been attributed to business with the county manager). Naomi also admits to finding his obsessions and quirky comments both cute and funny. Here, Caesar begins to share his theory on why one should savor the moment, and leave the fear of how long a good thing will last for “superstitious and peasant-minded fools”. He’s noticeably running off at the mouth, and the wine is making it difficult for her to take him seriously; although, at that very moment, they share one same desire.

CAESAR: I’m rambling, aren’t I? *(Naomi snickers, causing him to smile.)*

Would you like to wash up in my place?

A brief moment later, they’re outside. It’s a beautiful, breezy night at the beach. Naomi and Caesar hold hands as the valet brings his car. The radio is playing *Then You Can Tell Me Goodbye* by The Casinos.

NAOMI *(sighing)*: Wouldn’t it be nice to hear something new again?

Caesar agrees, and switches off the radio.

* * *

Before opening the front door to his waterfront apartment, with keys in hand, Caesar passionately kisses Naomi.

CAESAR: The very thought of anyone hurting you drains me with violence.

NAOMI (*smiling*): You're too silly.

Caesar hits the light switch upon opening and Naomi immediately screams with fright. The GHOST of an old woman points an accusatory finger while staring directly at Caesar's guest. While her melodramatic voice is quite audible, her lips do not move.

GHOST: What are your intentions with my son?

Caesar walks right up to his mother and slaps her across the face, stunning her. He then crosses over to the glass balcony doors and opens them.

CAESAR (*sternly*): Get out!

The woman lowers her head and does what he says; and Caesar closes the doors behind her. He then offers his apologies to Naomi, and voices his decision to follow someone's advice: he's going to have the apartment redecorated and painted a different color, which supposedly should thwart his mother's return.

CAESAR: She's intolerable. She's never been able to advance beyond treating her children like dolls for her to play with.

Naomi says she understands how he feels, and then drunkenly asks if he thinks she's over pampered Ardie. She says she doesn't believe she has, but that if she is mistaken, then it might be hurting him in the future, by not allowing him to develop self-reliance. Caesar recognizes her concern and comments on the detrimental, long-run effects caused by parents neglecting from doing the latter. He then begins regretting striking his mother, and Naomi quietly agrees that he shouldn't have done so. She advises that he should try to talk to her before painting the apartment; she then decides that she'd like for him to take her home. Caesar appears devastated, as their romantic evening has been ruined.

* * *

Titty receives a call from Freddy while she and Ardie are heading back home. Bypassing hellos, Freddy tells her that as soon as she returns, he's going to stick her in a big black kettle and cook her while he dances around "with [his] dick out, like a Zulu warrior." As usual, Freddy is busy showing property ("in the friggin' dark") and hasn't stopped for a bite to eat yet; and as a result, he has become somewhat delirious.

TITTY (*teasingly*): Baby! You keep talkin' like that, I'm gonna hafta jump somebody down here.

FREDDY: You say what you want. I got bitches jumpin' over my fence.

It's true. Their neighborhood has just recently become a bit overrun by stray dogs. The mixed breeds chase each other into nearly everyone's backyard, and they growl and bark at residents who are trying to get to work in the morning. At

that hour, when the problem is for some reason worse, Freddy and Titty are in bed, unable to fall back asleep. Titty covers her head with a pillow while Freddy simply loses his self-control.

FREDDY: Oh, my God—SHUT UP!!!

But, returning back to the present moment—

TITTY: Dude, have you talked to anybody about that yet?

FREDDY (*playfully exaggerating*): How? I can't find time to eat, I can't sleep, my baby's crazy!

With the concealment from Freddy of having handled firearms and the indiscriminate killing of the bird both weighing on her conscience, Titty confesses to the shooting in the Everglades. She knows Freddy tolerates her obsession with knives and other weapons, but that he's genuinely terrified of her handling a gun. Noticing his silence on the other end, Titty asks if he's still there. Gathering his composure, he tells her that he's had to pull over. A few seconds pass when Freddy, who's on the verge of crying, finally tells her that had he lost her due to an accident, nothing else would have kept him going.

TITTY: *Dildo*. Dude, listen. You gotta eat something, baby. You're turnin' into mush on me. ... I'm sorry.

Freddy adds that he'd rather she leave him for someone else, if it meant her being happier; preferring that than having to deal with her death. So Titty tells Freddy that "now [he's] really just talkin' shit", and reminds him to go eat

something; she advises that he cancel or postpone his appointment, in order to do so. Titty doesn't notice but Ardie frowns and shrugs, as he doesn't believe it to be such a big deal. Freddy tells her that he's glad she had the experience of using the weapon, and that she and he are both very lucky that she learned a lesson. Titty promises him that she's sticking to shooting paintball guns, and she asks Freddy to take her shooting when she gets back. Just then, she realizes her failure to have captured the moment in the Everglades. She turns to Ardie.

TITTY: Aw, shit. Man, we didn't take any pictures.

Changing the subject, Freddy asks if she and Ardie can do him a favor while she's down there. He asks to speak with her cousin, and so Titty passes Ardie her cell. Freddy wants them to try and track down an obscure, martial arts movie, which he has a few minutes worth of footage—though he doesn't have the title—spliced into an old family videotape. Having uploaded it online to use as reference to aid his quest, he wants to email the link to Ardie; to see if maybe they can find a local mom and pop specialty shop, which might have it. With a relaxed air of confidence, Ardie tells Freddy that they'll comb through the phone book and email Freddy's video around wherever they have to. He assures Freddy that he'll get right on it in the morning.



MONDAY

Emmanuel and his wife are taking turns posing for pictures while touring the Jewish sites in Jerusalem; despite his wife's hesitance, he manages to persuade a few of the local inhabitants to pose with him for a few friendly comical shots. As they head towards the Western Wall Tunnel, the two young insurgents (seen earlier) stealthily close in on them; as it appears they've decided to strike. Several nearby explosives are suddenly set off, causing a panic and an intended distraction, before one of them prepares to open fire, unveiling his AK-47.

Finding him separately, the gunman sprays his bullets into Emmanuel, as well as many into the wall beside him; and the rounds send Emmanuel spinning as he falls to the ground. Two policemen attempt to chase the assassins, but the teens manage to elude them. And as the young duo is secretly driven away, they clumsily share a high five.

A traumatized bystander, splattered with her baby's blood, stares at what's left of her child; too devastated with horror to react, her tears begin to fall and wet her cheeks with the sounds of approaching sirens. The ambulance, however, becomes detained when the motorist transporting the young killers crashes into it. Preferring death and perhaps martyrdom, the two teens set off additional explosives and blow themselves up.

* * *

Browsing through an open-air shopping mall while figuring out where to begin biting into a candy apple, Titty spots a fantasy sword and knife display behind a

gift store window. Naomi walks up beside her (without a sugar-coated treat for herself), smiles, and shakes her head. Titty, naturally, has to go inside.

Several stores further down, inside a dimly lit bookstore, a very old retail worker is replenishing an end cap display of staff recommendations with a trade paperback (*Personal Recollections of Joan of Arc* by Mark Twain). (The name of the employee recommending it reads Luvinee. The closest two other titles are *The Iron Heel* by Jack London, which is recommended by Francesca; and *The Pro* written by Garth Ennis, which is recommended by Marconi.) The old man's plastic name tag says his name is Ardie.

A Hispanic male (in his late-30s) suddenly interrupts him and asks if he knows what the difference is between two editions of *The Communist Manifesto*. The now, much younger, 12-year-old Ardie takes a quick glance at them, and points out that one offers annotations while the other contains only the original text. As if to explain why he failed to notice the obvious, the man wonders aloud how his niece's school is going to gain their students' interest if he himself found it "too complicated" to skim through.

An older man (late-60s), standing in front of the register counter, hails to Ardie in Spanish, and tells him that he requires service. The old fellow's come to pick up a copy of *La Biblia de Miguelito (Mickey's Bible)*, which someone had phoned to place on hold for him. As Ardie steps behind the registers, the old-timer looks over at the younger customer approaching him, and takes notice of both copies of the *Manifesto*. He then asks Ardie, continuing in his native language, if he has no shame offering such a book for sale. Placing the bible on the counter, Ardie tries

to respond in Spanish; telling him that it isn't his shop to decide what to stock. The other customer, noticing the bible, chimes in with sarcasm (in English).

BOOKSTORE CUSTOMER # 1: Oh, come on. Jesus was a socialist.

The senior citizen retaliates by insulting the younger man; he calls him “*un anormal*.” He also makes it a point to tell him that Jesus’ actual “name was Yeshua”. He then, in turn, curses the Greeks for their more popular translation. As Ardie tries to intervene, the younger customer grabs the bible and, further taunting the old man, steps outside and dares him to follow. Ardie halts just outside of the store, unwilling to leave it unattended, and watches the old-timer chase after the opportunistic thief. While stepping back inside to attend to other customers, Ardie’s teen coworker (MARCONI) is returning from his lunch break, having caught a bite to eat, around the corner. While sipping a fountain soda, Marconi observes the somewhat out-of-breath, yet laughing, senior citizen catching up to the man who was taunting him, and patting him on the back.

Having been obligated to come in to work, due to the rest of the small staff becoming ill and/or unavailable, the customarily quiet and reserved Ardie briefly complains to Marconi, remarking that he’s going to avoid phone calls from the management when he’s off, from now on. Ardie has been assigned as the sole cashier to a busy sales night, while Marconi—who is the subject of an internal, theft investigation—is to attend to customers.

A surprise visit from his cousin and mother leaves him feeling more gyped than cheered up, although his phony “glad you came by” act conceals it. Not wishing to distract him while he’s busy charging customers, Titty and Naomi soon

say their goodbyes; Titty promises to keep an eye out for an agreeable pair of men's boots for him, as she's intent on looking for a pair for herself. Marconi waits until the last customer in line is rung up, before passing along his impressions of her.

MARCONI: *Bro*, your cousin's got a tight little body on her.

ARDIE (*turning red with anger*): HEY!!! Watch your filthy mouth!

MARCONI (*taken aback*): What's the big deal, dog? I didn't say she was an ugly bitch, did I?

A fully grown Ardie, now appearing the proper age of 18, cracks his tense neck. Just then, a white, long bearded, homeless man approaches the counter and dumps some crinkled dollars and collected change in front of him; he wishes to purchase a leather-bound edition of *The Gospel of the Flying Spaghetti Monster* by Bobby Henderson. The poor, war veteran weakly smiles and advises Ardie not to feel embarrassed about yelling, as he's reached his wit's end, as well.

* * *

Inside a mid-to-high range department store (located at one end of the mall), business seems to be moderately well. Two cosmetics saleswomen, working opposite corners, are estimating how many hours remain till closing while nearby shoppers Titty and Naomi browse through women's clothing. Naomi, finding the shoe clearance section ahead of her, calls Titty over; trailing far behind, Titty is grimacing at some of the prices on dresses, which are obviously unsuited for her

taste. Catching a glimmer of interest in Titty's hesitation over her findings, Naomi encourages her niece to try on a few "girlie" dress shoes.

A short distance away, checking herself out in a pair of high heels (with the aid of a small, shoe mirror) is Naomi in her early-30s. Her 10-year-old is giggling at his older cousin Chastity (12), who is interrogating a black boy (around Ardie's age) outside one of the fitting rooms; this boy's name is RORY. Chastity has been teaching Ardie the lyrics to *Methodist Coloring Book* by the Dead Milkmen, and Rory is opposed to singing along with them. Rory has been standing there, eagerly waiting for Fawn to come out, as she is presently trying on an absurd amount of apparel. The little that Chastity extracts from Rory reveals that he doesn't wish to follow them anywhere near her aunt, either; apparently Rory finds her cousin Ardie also somewhat disagreeable.

The saleswoman sighs as she uses a garment rack to hang up the last set of dresses, which Fawn has been trying out; many of them appear to have been selected at random, due to their conflictive styles. Upon her stepping out of the room, Rory rushes to Fawn's side and looks up at her with sad, begging eyes while she, clutching onto one morbid-colored outfit, addresses him with a noticeably artificial display of affection.

FAWN: Don't worry, sweetheart. Mommy's leaving now. Has Chastity been playing with you, *darlin'*?

Rory sticks to her like glue, as Fawn walks over to the nearest cashier's station. Titty and Ardie run over to where Naomi's been keeping herself entertained, as they've all been waiting on "Bambi", who is now "done trying on half the store."

The saleswoman who has been attending to Fawn, flips over her credit card, which bears Naomi's name on it—it's nearly identical to the same one stolen earlier (or years later) by Sylvester—and fails to find a picture ID. Looking up at Fawn, the woman asks her for some identification. Fawn explains that she doesn't have any on her, due to the theft of her purse, which she claims was stolen while she was at the beach. So the older woman blinks, says "okay", and runs the card through the machine. Rory swings around Fawn while clutching onto her, as Naomi walks over with the kids.

Embarrassed by her sister's lack of consideration for the saleswoman's time (along with everyone else's), Naomi thanks the woman for her patience; Fawn, as a result, shoots her sister a contemptuous glance while maintaining a rigid smile. The older woman tells her that "it's alright", as she's had to work every day for the past week, and has acquired a great deal of patience thanks to a lot of "stuck up and selfish South American tourists"; she mentions that she is still getting used to working retail, having been laid-off by the county. Just then, she tells Fawn that her card has been declined. The saleswoman then reads something else.

Not far away is a Hispanic female police officer arguing with a black sales manager. He's trying to calm her down, as she insists that their relationship is over; she also demands that he return a box, which belongs to her. He explains that he had been hoping that she would come to collect it, just to see her; the sales manager also tells her that he loves her, but she doesn't want to have anything further to do with him, except to reclaim her property. In the midst of their passionate dispute, the saleslady behind the counter calls him over; so he has to excuse himself, asking his ex-lover to grant him a moment.

Reading what the older woman points out to him, the manager tells Fawn that her card has been reported stolen. Fawn, with great theatrical flair, deems that there must be something faulty with their system; adding that she just used it the prior day without any trouble. Just then, Naomi notices that the card is actually hers, and claims it as such; Naomi also states that the card was stolen, along with her purse while at the beach, and had called the bank to report it. The saleslady frowns while looking at Fawn, recollecting her earlier story. Realizing that she's been caught red-handed, Fawn laughs and tells her "sis" that she must have forgotten that she had lent it to her; she also admits to have forgotten to give it back and thought it was one of hers.

SALES MANAGER: Ma'am, excuse me for saying so, but I don't think you're telling the truth.

At that moment, the sales manager notices Rory, who has been hiding behind Fawn ever since he showed up. Rory is actually his son; as everyone comes to find out—through an exchange of words by Rory's biological father and Fawn—Rory's elderly grandmother took custody of him, as a judge ruled his father unsuitable for parenthood. Fawn is enrolled in a voluntary youth mentoring program, and has been both accepted and embraced by Rory's grandmother.

RORY (*crying*): Don't let him touch me, mommy!

FAWN (*cynically smiling*): So you're Rory's father. I know all about you. I heard everything you did to this little boy, you disgusting animal.

SALES MANAGER (*outraged*): Lady, what are you talking about?! (*He begins pounding the sales counter with one hand.*) I only touched him one time! I have reverted to Judaism!

LITTLE CHASTITY (*covering her mouth*): Black Jewish pervert.

The sales manager's screaming prompts the arrival of his former lover, who heatedly asks Fawn if Rory's father is forbidden from being within a certain physical distance of his son; the answer is yes. The female officer then removes her handcuffs from her belt, which causes him to back away. His retreat fuels her fury further, and she reaches out to grab him.

FEMALE OFFICER: Oh, you want to resist, huh? You want to resist? So that's why you're such a sick freak? You like touching babies?!

The sales manager asks that she quit hitting him, reminding her that he's within his rights to be at work. As he tries to ward her off, she cuffs him and takes him away while they continue to quarrel. No one at the sales counter knows quite what to say. Chastity takes Ardie by the hand and together they follow after the pederast and his arresting officer. Naomi decides to pay for Fawn's sales transaction, offering the sales woman another credit card. Fawn dramatically smiles, and thanks her.

Returning to the present—Naomi is complimenting Titty's feet, as her niece sways on her ankles while trying on a pair of high heels. Smiling with confidence while donning yet another pair of dress shoes, Titty snaps a close-up picture of herself and sends it to Freddy, via picture message. Freddy, meanwhile, is at his

employer's office conversing with a few of his fellow realtors, along with their broker. Upon receiving Titty's message, his eyes grow wide and he childishly bites down on a knuckle. Mischievously smiling, Freddy excuses himself and heads towards the restroom.

When Naomi returns to her side from having browsed around for herself, Titty receives a message back from Freddy. She tells her aunt what she did and prepares to share with her his response. Fortunately, a sudden recollection distracts Naomi while Titty's eyes and mouth simultaneously widen with surprise. Though not too quickly, Titty stuffs her phone away into her back pocket; apparently, Freddy's picture message is not for sharing. She grins to herself, and resumes admiring the shoes on her feet just as Naomi turns again to address her.

NAOMI: Hey, do you remember Rory? I wonder whatever happened to that little kid.

TITTY (*frowning*): What little kid? Who's Rory?

Titty clarifies that "Bambi" was never a "Big Sister" to a boy named Rory, nor to anyone else. Jogging her memory, Naomi then realizes that the story behind Rory came by way of Titty's grandmother; as it was Fawn and Naomi's mother whom had been fed that tale by her eldest daughter, and had then relayed it to her youngest. Those were the years when Fawn was hopping from state to state, exploiting one husband after another, and all the while dragging Titty in tow.

NAOMI: My sister is amazing. And poor mom would believe everything she told her. Do you know that Fawn would make up stories with her in

them, and convince her that they were true? I would ask her, “Mom, do you actually remember that happening?” And she would admit to me, “No, but Fawn does.”

TITTY: Don’t feel bad, Mimi. Bambi’s the biggest idiot I’ve ever met in my whole life.

* * *

Tony gets the call he’s been waiting for while having to be stuck at home, for the obligatory family get-together with the in-laws. The news arrives from an undisclosed caller that Emmanuel has been “taken care of.” Tony impulsively calls Caesar from his study “in purgatory”.

TONY (gleefully): We’re all socialists now!

His wife, Claire, suddenly enters the room where Tony has secluded himself. She walks up right behind him and sighs, looking impatient.

CLAIRE: I need you to watch over my brother’s kids. They’re driving everyone up the wall. Just take them out back and throw them in the pool. You can do that and talk on the phone, can’t you?

TONY (*cynically smiling*): Sorry, but I already have a job. Which, by the way, I’m attending to. What is it *you’re* doing? Besides giving me the evil eye?

CLAIRE (*calmly*): I’m refraining from picking up the phone and having you gunned down.

TONY (*pressing his phone against his chest*): You're the best, Claire. (*She turns her back on him, expecting her husband to follow.*) Are you going to move to Singapore with me, honey?

CLAIRE: Finish up and get out here.

Caesar says he doesn't wish to discuss anything over the phone. They're to talk about this in the morning, assuring that he'll meet up with him. Unbeknownst to Tony, both Caesar and the COUNTY MANAGER (a tall, large, effeminate male in his early 40s) are in the company of the Chinese. Caesar's party, including several Gay Pride organizers, enjoys drinks and music on the rooftop pool deck of an oceanfront hotel. Except for when he is being addressed by someone, Caesar looks rather miserable; and he fails to notice that the County Manager, who is conversing with drag queens, keeps staring at him. The Chinese, on the other hand, appear to be having a wonderful time while the DJ smiles to himself, as he plays a contemporary lounge version of Claude Morgan's *El Bimbo*.



TUESDAY

Ardie and Titty have managed to track down Freddy's sought-after Asian film to a small, movie rental/martial arts supply store in Overtown called Superdragon Connection. A sun shower is passing over the predominantly black neighborhood where Ardie's yellow CRX is parked along the sidewalk, directly in front of the perfume shop, next door.

Inside, Titty and Ardie are being presented the quality of the DVD-R recording they've had placed on hold. Ardie (maintaining his 18-year-old appearance) looks intently at the flat screen computer monitor while Titty is having a hard time focusing, with all the weapons scattered about.

TITTY (*to herself*): I shoulda been a man.

Ardie tells the chubby, Chinese American shop owner (CHRIS) and his large, black associate (HUEY) that both he and his cousin were calling and emailing Freddy's video clip throughout the county. Chris (who is in his mid-30s) is delighted by Ardie's comment, and boasts that the reason he supplies what they failed to find "in two states" was because he's "got shit nobody[']s got."

Huey (also in his mid-30s) slips the movie into a white paper DVD sleeve and hands it over to Ardie. Upon doing so, Chris instructs the big guy to type up Ardie's statement on their website's testimonial page; he then adds to incorporate his "shit" comment into their tagline. Chris tells Ardie and Titty that most of their video sales come from orders placed online. He prides himself as having the best kung fu and martial arts movie collection, compared to anywhere else he's looked into.

CHRIS: *Man, I got every muthafucka but God fightin' on home video. (Inspired, his eyes widen and he turns to Huey.)* Yo, Huey. Put that shit in there, too.

HUEY: Hold up, man.

Upon exiting with Ardie, Titty looks over her shoulder to glance at their merchandise once more, and catches both Chris and Huey eyeing her in a rather vulgar manner. Once outside, she quickly informs Ardie that her "nunchucks" collection alone is "worth more than all the junk those dumb-asses got in there."

* * *

Off the Florida coast, a gratuitous close-up (with the ocean in the background) focuses on the excessive, surgically-enlarged buttocks of a South American woman, who is sunbathing on the deck of Tony's boat. Tony's head approaches from above, and he quietly laughs as he goofily pokes, sniffs, kisses, and presses his lips against her flesh to cause flatulent noises.

As Tony clinks his cocktail glass with hers—though she refrains from getting up—his cell phone suddenly rings. A familiar laugh and voice greeting him on the other end begins to upset Tony; and he does nothing to hide his erupting anger, as he begins to realize that “[the] Cuban Mafia” is still alive. Emmanuel is calling him from his hospital bed in Jerusalem.

TONY (*raging mad*): THOSE GOOD-FOR-NOTHING, MOTHERFUCKING
TERRORISTS!!!

EMMANUEL (*cynically smiling, quoting Shakespeare*): *Ah, et tu, Brute?*

Tony realizes too late that he's utterly incriminated himself, and pathetically tries to backtrack; he half-crazily laughs and blames his confusion on stress at home. Apparently, as Emmanuel tells it, his assassin's bullets hit nothing vital. A prior call to Emmanuel's attorney from the Chinese businessmen (with the premature news of his death) has somehow been traced back through the grapevine to Tony. Emmanuel's wife yanks the phone away from her husband and yells incoherently at “*el imbécil*” while a plane flies over the hospital. A manhunt is under way, she promises him. Mossad agents are standing by Emmanuel's bedside, trying to encourage her to calm down (in Hebrew) and to prompt Tony into revealing his co-conspirators.

Tony suddenly wakes up in a sweat, and begins laughing with relief. Claire, lying on the far side of their king-sized bed, tells him to shut up and to quit touching her. Noticing the daylight coming through the drawn curtains on their bedroom window, he stops laughing.

TONY: Oh, my God. What time is it? *(He looks at his alarm clock.)* It's the middle of the day!

CLAIRE: I didn't feel like getting up.

* * *

Up on the 29th floor of the Government Center building in Downtown Miami, Naomi is locking her computer and collecting her things, as she's about to step out to take her lunch break. The County Manager (CM), who is standing a short distance behind her, is staring at her shoes—they're a pair she was trying on yesterday, at the mall. Walking up beside her, he compliments her taste. Upon her thanking him, the CM then complains about his wife and daughter not being into fashion; he states that he "practically [has] to dress them up" himself. With a short laugh, Naomi mentions that she has a similar situation with her niece, whom she's trying to influence.

COUNTY MANAGER: Oh, that's right. You told me she was visiting. That's why you asked for days off. Family is so important. I know my pastor says family comes after God, but I happen to think a few things got mistranslated. You know how when you say something in Spanish,

it's sometimes backwards in English? I'm sorry—you're heading out to eat, aren't you? Where are you *going*?

The CM gets excited when he finds out that she's meeting Caesar, and points out what a gentleman he is; he adds also that Caesar sets the example when it comes to "the perks" of making friends "everywhere". He tells her how both he and Caesar were bored at last night's event, which, he explains, was part of an ongoing entertainment package which will hopefully stimulate the Chinese group's local business interests. The CM then starts brownnosing.

COUNTY MANAGER: Yeah, you know what? We don't need a leave slip for you. Just take the rest of the afternoon off, so you can enjoy your lunch. And spend some time with your niece, too.

NAOMI: Oh, are you sure? I would appreciate that. Thank you.

COUNTY MANAGER: Just make sure to tell him my good deeds. I need to score some brownie points with that man of yours. Besides, you're doing a great job, Naomi. You're not like Sylvia. She's too high and mighty to bring us some Cuban coffee from downstairs.

Sylvia (one of his assistants) is moving about the office, as she's busy working; she laughs, being accustomed to the CM's sense of humor. A secretary suddenly hails to him from inside her adjacent room, deciding upon not getting up. She yells that she has "the director on the line", wishing to speak to him.

COUNTY MANAGER: The director of *what*?

SECRETARY (*with a hint of sarcasm*): The police department, sir.

COUNTY MANAGER (*sighing*): Tell him I went out to lunch with some firemen. That oughta piss him off. (*He addresses the staff present.*) Don't mean to brag ladies, but I'm going to have my pear raviolis.

Exiting the elevator together and stepping into the parking garage, the CM waves Naomi goodbye as they part ways. Sliding her key into what she believes is her car door, she finds herself struggling to open it; only then does she realize (by looking inside) that this vehicle—although it's the same make, model, and color—is parked beside hers.

* * *

Driving to meet with Naomi, Caesar is trying to hang up with Tony. The situation according to Tony is that the attempt on Emmanuel's life was just that; while he may have been dreaming earlier, a lot of it appears to have transpired. Tony says that someone—from what sounds like an overabundance of co-conspirators—is out to get him; he thinks he's being set up "like Lee Harvey Oswald." Caesar claims that he hasn't heard anything out of the ordinary going on, and suggests that Tony might be suffering from too much stress at home.

CAESAR: Listen, I need to let you go. Naomi's calling me on the other line. My advice to you is to hire an escort and take a cruise somewhere. Try the Cayman Islands.

Arriving at a five-star hotel restaurant overlooking Biscayne Bay, Naomi hands her keys to the valet and waits for Caesar in the lobby. The place is overcrowded and noisy, as a party of some sort is taking place there.

Upon turning in his keys to the parking attendant, Caesar is nearly knocked over by a handful of little brats who are chasing after one another, and which run into the lobby ahead of him. He nearly throws a tantrum, but immediately calms himself down when he spots Naomi. Upon just noticing his arrival, she smiles and greets him with a warm kiss on the lips. Together they savor their moment of bliss for just a few seconds more until Caesar registers the crowd lying directly in front of them. Asking one of the concierges what's going on, Caesar is immediately put off to find out that it's a wedding reception. Naomi then makes him aware that she doesn't have to return to work, which offers him the relief she was aiming for; and both decide to leave to lunch elsewhere.

A fat, little boy (PABLITO) is having his cheeks pinched by his grandmother while a pianist and string trio performs for the bride and groom's party. Upset and fidgety, Pablito wants to play with the other children.

PABLITO'S GRANDMOTHER (*Spanish, subtitled*): Look how nice the man plays the cello. My Pablito is going to take lessons to play for his granny, right?

PABLITO (*Spanish, subtitled*): No, I hate the cello!

Pablito grabs a dessert plate off the table and throws it at the cellist's instrument. The musician immediately stops playing and looks angrily at the offender and his grandmother. He then turns to address his fellow players.

CELLIST (*Spanish, subtitled*): I can't handle anymore of this lack of culture. I'm leaving.

Outside, the valet drives up to return Caesar's automobile, and together, both he and Naomi, leave in his vehicle. Across the street, Sylvester and Fawn's car pulls away from the curb and follows after them.

* * *

Both parties are travelling eastbound on MacArthur Causeway, approaching Palm Island, when Sylvester takes it upon himself to rear-end Caesar's car. Sylvester's sudden erratic driving catches the attention of a parked police vehicle, which stirs the driver to activate its emergency lights and pursue them. Too preoccupied to having spotted the law yet, Sylvester drives up and alongside Caesar. Hoping to arouse fear, he carelessly brandishes a cheap handgun in front of Fawn's face to point it at his ex-wife's lover.

SYLVESTER: Remember me, tough guy?! Look what I bought! (*Sylvester glances over at Naomi while driving more recklessly.*) And I've got something better than mace for you too, sweetie!

Fawn is actually the only one who appears frightened. Sylvester's failure to keep an eye on upcoming traffic causes her to suddenly yell.

FAWN: What are you doing?! Put that gun away, you idiot! LOOK OUT!

Acknowledging the increasingly short distance between them and the vehicle ahead, Sylvester suddenly brakes and swerves to prevent from slamming into the back of it. As dreaded, his gun accidentally goes off in front of Fawn's face and damages her eyes.

The patrol car manages to pull both of them over without any resistance, and a POLICE SERGEANT (age 46) has everyone stand outside, excluding Fawn, who is advised to remain in her seat and maintain a blood-absorbing garment to her face; upon stepping away from her, the policeman mumbles something over the radio on his chest harness, and out of earshot. With an uneasy look and a series of expressions revealing that his thoughts are elsewhere, the Sergeant asks Naomi, Caesar, and Sylvester what happened. As Sylvester begins to accuse Caesar of "driving like a maniac and waving a gun at [him]" while Caesar tells the Sergeant that he's friends with his chief, as well as assuring him of his credentials, Naomi, who's been studying the sergeant's body language, asks him if he's alright.

The police sergeant lifts his gaze from the ground and looks at her, then at the two men, who have become quiet with sudden curiosity. He begins telling them that his girlfriend, who had two years left to retire from the police department, had just had her position "terminated" to abide by cuts being made by the new mayor. The mentioning of the mayor causes him to lose his temper, and he proceeds to vent with rage.

POLICE SERGEANT: We're supposed to be serving the public, right? That's what you're paying us for? To watch out for our neighborhoods

and not to be taking advantage of our jobs, right? We're going to serve the public, alright. I'm going to steer all these mopeds to where all these goddamn Julios live, and for once they're going to destroy something worth it! You want to know whose corrupting government, no matter who we vote for? I'm going to tell you where they live! And I'm going to toast marshmallows while their houses burn to the ground!

Caesar takes a step towards him, raising an open hand.

CAESAR: Sir, calm down.

POLICE SERGEANT: What do you want from me? You work the best years of your life away while somebody gets a cut of your salary, because you can't be trusted to save it for yourself. And for what? So that they can spend it on phony positions and sweet deals for their friends? Bullshit! And in the meanwhile they fatten you up with lousy health advice, so that when they're done with you you're too sick to enjoy yourself. Look at my partner! She's so sick and out-of-shape she can barely wedge herself out of the car.

CAESAR (*frowning*): There's somebody in there?

POLICE SERGEANT (*defensively*): Was that supposed to be a racist remark?

CAESAR: No. No, sir. I really can't see her from here.

FAWN (*sobbing*): I can't see anything!

From where Caesar and the others are standing, it really does appear that the heavily-tinted police vehicle is unoccupied.

POLICE SERGEANT: It's *she* who can barely see *you*, sir. She's got cataracts, a thyroid disorder, diabetes, she's borderline obese—all that and three mouths to feed. And do you have any idea how much discouragement an officer deals with on a daily basis from within our own department? Not to mention that on top of all that we've got those degenerates on Channel 4 milking it every time one of us goofs up. And everyone expects us to just swallow it like mindless robots.

FAWN: They're trying to kill you all, officer. They're anarchists!

POLICE SERGEANT (*addressing Fawn*): I'm a sergeant, lady. And no, my dear. There's simply more money to be made by making us all ill. Just lie still and be quiet. I had my partner notify Fire Rescue, and they should already be in en route. You need to be thinking positive, ma'am.

FAWN: Who did you talk to? Are you sure?!

NAOMI: I've been doing a lot of reading lately, and I'm starting to really believe that a lot of these ailments have to do with what we're eating.

FAWN: That's why I'm a vegetarian! Nothing but soy!

Sylvester rolls his eyes back, knowing this not to be true.

POLICE SERGEANT (*addressing Naomi*): You're preaching to the choir, miss. But do you think any of my buddies listen to me? Or my partner,

for that matter? No, they'd rather spend the little extra they've got left to buy the latest apparatus, which always winds up getting outdated in six months anyway. You know why everything made in America sucks? It's because nobody gives a shit anymore. And, "what's the point of building things made to last, if we can't make money off of fixing them?"

CAESAR: I hope you don't take this the wrong way, but I'd be more careful who you say these things to. You never know who they might know.

POLICE SERGEANT (*calming down*): Yeah, I know. You're right. That's good advice. I appreciate that, man. Thanks. (*He gazes at his patrol car while gesturing towards Caesar.*) You see, Chanel?! White people!

CAESAR: Uh, not at all. Do you mind if I ask you what your politics are?

With great pride, the police sergeant withdraws his wallet from his back pocket to remove a card, which he then hands over to Caesar. Caesar only glances at it, then swiftly hands it back to him and looks at him expressionlessly while withdrawing his own wallet to present the sergeant with a similar card. The sergeant exchanges a look of respect with Caesar, and nods.

POLICE SERGEANT: That makes a ton of sense. Brother, you just made my day.

The sergeant salutes him by raising a clenched fist; and Caesar, in turn, returns the salute, by raising one back. Naomi frowns, looking puzzled. Her lips part as she clearly wants to say something, but then decides against it.

SYLVESTER: Hey, wait a minute. What the hell was that?

POLICE SERGEANT: You mind your business, sir. And we'll mind ours.

SYLVESTER: Oh, yeah. Sure. Well, I'll have the both of you know that I'm a Mason.

NAOMI: A Mason? Since when?

CAESAR: Where's your ring?

SYLVESTER: What ring? Oh. Well, I had to pawn it. It's like you said, officer—I mean, uh, sergeant. Things are bad everywhere.

POLICE SERGEANT: What a disgrace. And what's worse is that I don't see things improving, either.

CAESAR: Don't pay any attention to him. He's full of it. You don't see any emblems or decals on his car, do you?

POLICE SERGEANT: It wouldn't surprise me with the types I've been seeing on the road.

NAOMI (to Sylvester): You and my sister are definitely meant for each other.

FAWN: Shut up, you witch! And keep that son-of-a-bitch away from me!

CAESAR: I bet he doesn't even have a permit for that gun, either.

POLICE SERGEANT: Yeah, how about it, pal? Let's see it.

SLYVESTER: You know what? That's it. I've had it. To hell with all of you!

Sylvester spins around and dives off the causeway, and into the bay. The sergeant, Caesar, and Naomi all watch as he swims away. The sergeant uses his radio to report "the suspect's" actions.

FAWN: Is he dead?! Did he kill himself?!

POLICE SERGEANT: You know, I don't expect any more for young people to tolerate our time-honored institutions, but it really gets my goat when a grown man hasn't more sense to show some respect. *(He turns to Naomi.)* Excuse my language, miss. But that guy's an asshole.

NAOMI: And you don't know the half of it.

* * *

Ardie is surfacing from beneath the waters of a cruddy lagoon, somewhere down by Islamorada. He and Titty are snorkeling with some ill cared for and untrained dolphins, which are being overseen by two young Latino ruffians in a small boat, who are discouraging the animals from escaping by using wooden paddles as clubs.

LATINO RUFFIAN 1 *(Spanish, subtitled):* Careful. Look, look! Here he comes!

A much older male named Kiki (who is in his early-to-mid-50s) is charging a hundred dollars per person to swim with the dolphins for half an hour; it's a "reasonable" price, as Titty and Ardie came to find out, when compared to what a

well-established park was charging a few miles away. Nevertheless, “Kiki ‘the Cokehead’ and his mean-ass dolphins” have infuriated Titty. And both she and Ardie reek of the filthy water.

While collecting their belongings to leave, Titty confesses to regretting having turned down the opportunity of rearranging Caesar’s face (on Sunday night); and admits that she resisted the urge of shoving Ardie out of his car to drive it into Chris’s shop (in Overtown) due to their disrespect. This last bit of information begins boiling Ardie’s blood while she adds that she’s tired of refraining from wanting to “kick somebody’s teeth in.” Titty says she’s “smokin’ pissed.” Yet it’s Ardie’s temper, as seen yesterday, that erupts like a volcano.

ARDIE: Those motherfuckers! You should have told me!

Titty’s jaw drops, and her anger seems to have been suddenly flushed out of her system.

TITTY (*teasingly*): *Ooo, wait till I tell Aunt Naomi what you just said.*

Now it’s Ardie who stands agape, as he’s too mad to find the humor in any of it.

ARDIE: You’ve got to be kidding me.

TITTY: *Oh, my little cousin’s such a dork. He’s so cute. (She hugs him, takes a whiff, frowns, and then backs off.)* Goddamn.

ARDIE: Yeah, we stink.

Some potential customers have shown up with a toddler, and are debating doing business with Kiki. The little boy points a finger at the hostile animals.

TODDLER (*Spanish, subtitled*): Look, daddy. Sharks.

TODDLER'S MOTHER (*Spanish, subtitled*): Adolfo, could you please tell the child that those are dolphins?

TODDLER'S FATHER (*Spanish, subtitled*): I've already told him ten times, woman. He keeps persisting that they're sharks. Let him call them whatever he wants. Or if you want to be just as stubborn, why don't you try to convince him? (*He walks away, flustered.*) *Me cago en la madre que me parió mil veces por haberme casado con esta mujer.*

One of Kiki's hired thugs is standing by the side of the main road, holding a crudely made sign. Written (in Spanish) with a thick black marker, the sign asks motorists if they would like to bathe with "Fliper" for a cheap price.

Making their way through the trail where Ardie has his car parked, just barely tucked away from the road, Titty spots a pair of Latina punkers coming their way. As she and her cousin approach the young women, she compliments their deathhawk hairstyles. The English-challenged punkers—both of whom are sipping beers—thank her. They smile, appearing to be drunk or high, with bloodshot eyes, while Titty adds that she's now convinced that she needs to get rid of her "nice girl" haircut. The more talkative of the two tries to return the compliment.

PUNK ROCK GIRL 1: *Ay, but it looks nice on you. You look cute.*

TITTY: Yeah, but there. You see? I don't wanna look cute. I bet nobody messes with you guys.

PUNK ROCK GIRL 2: Oh, no. All the time.

While Titty converses with the punkers—asking them if there are any good local bands—Ardie's attention is drawn back towards the trail from which he and she came.

* * *

12-year-old Ardie and a taller, CHUBBY KID (about the same age) are somewhere in the suburban Town of Miami Springs, exiting a public building surrounded by a neatly-trimmed lawn and a tree-shaded park with a bike trail running through it. Approaching the building is a pleasant-faced REDHEADED WOMAN (in her early-to-mid-50s), who stops at the foot of the steps and addresses them with a smile and a low, sensuous tone.

REDHEADED WOMAN: Is this the library?

CHUBBY KID: Nah, the library's that way. *(He points in the opposite direction, behind her.)*

She continues to smile at them, appearing not the least bit interested in books.

REDHEADED WOMAN: Would you boys like to see something nice?

She proceeds to lure Ardie and his friend into the park, as the two follow curiously enough after her, to a space beneath a canopy of trees. The chubby kid

elbows Ardie with a mischievous grin; Ardie appears to be drawing his own smile primarily from his friend's, and less from other interests. Whatever she winds up doing (which goes unfilmed) scares the second boy so badly that he bolts out of there, leaving Ardie, without thinking twice about it.

CHUBBY KID: Ho, shit!

Her actions require Ardie to tilt his head back, as if she has somehow grown in height. Lips parted, his expression is of one in awe.

Indeed, a close-up of her face appears as if her head is close by the highest tree branches; the sun comes beaming behind them. She asks Ardie why he doesn't flee. Half-stunned, he responds simply by saying that he hadn't felt the need to. She seems pleased by this and asks him his name.

REDHEADED WOMAN: If you had never heard how everything came to be, Ardie, what would you guess its story to be? *(He motions to respond, but then hesitates.)* What would you want it to be?

ARDIE: Do you only ask questions?

REDHEADED WOMAN: Would you rather I tell you what to think?

ARDIE: Who are you? What's your name?

REDHEADED WOMAN: What do you see over my shoulder?

ARDIE: The sun?

REDHEADED WOMAN: What does the sun bring?

ARDIE: Light? Who are you?

REDHEADED WOMAN: Who would you really like me to be?

* * *

A young teenage woman wearing a small gold crucifix necklace is looking up at the list of menu items posted above the cashier, inside an informal restaurant. Her boyfriend, standing close beside her, is also looking at what there is to eat. He keeps browsing while bestowing a kiss on her forehead and gently squeezes her hand.

Ardie and Titty are seated outside of the establishment, which is situated along the main road—not far from where they just were. Both are eating shredded roast pork sandwiches. Titty’s enthralled by the taste of the meat while Ardie tells her that he’s had better; he also deduces that what she’s taken by is the *mojo* sauce the cook(s) used to marinate the pork with. She jots the name into her phone, so as not to forget to pick some up at the supermarket, when she gets back to Mulgachaw; she says it “sounds like a rap song.” The meal conjures up the topic of her pet pig, Smokey, whom she had wanted to name “Little Black Peter”, but the little pig wouldn’t respond to it; she and Freddy shortly realized that Smokey had already become accustomed to his breeder’s nickname for him, which was much to Freddy’s relief. (Smokey’s breeder was a pot farmer and is a nearby neighbor of Freddy’s parents.) Titty claims that Smokey is the cleanest and best pet she’s ever had.

TITTY: Who the hell says pigs are filthy animals, anyway?

ARDIE: Mostly Jews and Muslims.

TITTY: Hey, why is it that terrorists always go after the little people, man? How come they don't ever go after the big guys? I mean if you're gonna go apeshit and take yourself out anyway, why not at least do some good, right?

ARDIE: Who do you think they should go after?

TITTY: Aw, I don't know names, man. I don't drive myself crazy followin' what the fuck's goin' on. Freddy knows more about that stuff, 'cause of his job. But he's like me when it comes to all that bullshit. He tells people we're with "none of the above". As long we're not part of some damn group or goin' to hell that suits me.

ARDIE: Because you don't want to be told what to do?

TITTY: Exactly.

ARDIE: But isn't there safety in numbers?

TITTY: Fuck that. I ain't followin' nobody. I had enough of that shit, followin' my retarded mom around. Oh! But speakin' of Muslims, there's this Arab chick that started workin' at Mose a few weeks ago. It sucks I don't have any pictures to show you, but this girl's smokin' hot. I mean, I'm not gay or nothin', but—

ARDIE (*in understanding*): No.

TITTY: But you know what I mean. She's got like this British accent that all the hicks drool over. You oughta see 'em, man. You'd swear they're creamin' their jeans. Funny thing is she looks mean as shit, too, like she could tear the roof off a house. (*Titty frowns.*) What was the point of that? (*Ardie's chewing on a mouthful of food and can't help her.*) I don't know. But anyway, she seems cool. Don't know any Jews, though.

Titty switches the subject back to pork (her pot-bellied pig, actually) due to the taste of her sandwich.

TITTY: Did I show you pictures of my baby? (*She withdraws her smartphone, once more.*) Hey, Ardie, I just realized somethin'. He's your first nephew!

ARDIE: Actually, he'd— Yeah, you showed me those, already.

TITTY: Momma's little shit. (*She shoves her phone in his face.*) Look! Here's me bottle-feedin' him the day after we brought him home.

Ardie laughs at her while she scrolls through her smartphone's photo album.

ARDIE: I saw those already, crazy.

TITTY (*baby talk*): *Yeahhh. Aw, God.* I'm gonna bite his little black ass when I get back.

Ardie suddenly points out the young Christian couple (seen inside), now seated at a nearby table, saying grace before eating.

ARDIE: There's something you don't see every day.

TITTY: Aw. You see? They look cute when they're doin' that kinda thing. But, *man*, you're gonna hafta do a lot more to convince me that somebody smart enough to put all this shit together is fuckin' around with some devil. Only a dumb-ass would send a little kid, or anybody, to a place like hell. *(She smiles with a sudden thought.)* Hey. What would you do if there were a heaven? You know, if they'd let ya in?

ARDIE: You mean if I could live forever and do anything?

TITTY: Sky's the limit. Anything you want.

ARDIE: I don't know. I guess then I'd go for experiencing everything all at the same time.

TITTY: Yeah, it'd be like being a vampire. I'd just be flying around and doing all kinds of things. Even though there's still some gross and nasty shit I just wouldn't do. What do you mean by all at the same time?

ARDIE *(smiling while imagining it):* You know, imagine if you could experience life as different kinds of animals and people, all at the same time. There's only so much you can do at once, and even though I'd have forever to experience everything— Could you imagine what a rush that would be like? It might even be more fun to try to somehow temporarily forget that you're more than just one thing. Actually, the suspense from not knowing would definitely make it more intense. It'd be really interesting to see where that could lead to.

TITTY (*frowning*): That sounds like some gay ass shit to me.

ARDIE (*laughing*): That's not what I was thinking about.

TITTY: Or like some fucked up video game. Hey, there you go! You wanna study to get into big business like dipshit, right? You oughta get your ass investin' in gamin' and entertainment, and stuff.

Ardie stops smiling, as he contemplates.

ARDIE: Actually, that sounds like a great idea.

TITTY: Yeah, remember how fun we used to think it'd be to be watchin' a horror flick in a theatre and have Pazuzu sittin' next to you? That'd be some freaky shit, if you think about it.

ARDIE: I can't believe I hadn't thought of that sooner. Man, I kept pondering over every other industry. Titty, I think you hit the nail on the head for me.

TITTY: Of course, man. People wanna have fun. Just don't forget the little people when you're stinkin' rich and partyin' with Bobby Gates. And you better remember who's your favorite cousin, 'cause I want my kick-back. Nah, I'm just kiddin', you know?

ARDIE: By the way, you meant to say Bill Gates.

TITTY: Oh, yeah. Well, you know who I meant. Where the hell did I get Bobby Gates from?²

ARDIE: You know, that's funny that you keep mentioning vampires.

TITTY (*frowning*): What're you talkin' bout? When was that?

ARDIE: Well, just right now, a second ago. And I think once or twice since Friday.

TITTY: You sure? I know I've got a little ADD, so I'll believe it if you say so. But I honestly don't remember saying anythin' just before now. When were the other times?

ARDIE (*pondering it over*): No. You're right, I think. Never mind.

* * *

Tony is at home, and armed to the teeth. He's frantically packing a suitcase full of clothes while yelling irrational obscenities at Claire, who is carelessly enjoying a cigarette with a martini. Tony blames the "pill-popping carpet-cleaner" for all his troubles while Claire mumbles that he's much "too small fry" to be expecting some "Colombian monkey squad to show up here" and kill him.

CLAIRE: Why don't you try taking a Xanax? It'll make you feel better. Maybe then you'll shut up.

TONY: Oh! Oh, of course! Drugs! Yes, that's the answer to everything! You princess shit!

Tony impulsively pitches a heavy lamp at her head and cracks it open. Not knowing what else to do, he loads her body into the trunk of his car and pulls out

of his driveway. He immediately calls Caesar and asks if he's home. Impatiently, Caesar asks what he's calling for.

TONY: Oh, nothing. Are you going to be there for a while?

Caesar is actually out at the moment. Not wanting to lose him, Tony asks Caesar how he would ("hypothetically speaking") get rid of a body.

CAESAR: I would probably feed it to the alligators in the Everglades. Or actually, better yet, I'd dispose of it by taking it to some pig farmers in "the Redlands". A herd of those animals could eat everything. The trick is simply to tell absolutely no one.

TONY: Do you have any contacts down there? Can you call somebody for me?

CAESAR: Look, I have to let you go. I'm in the middle of something.

Caesar is in the midst of dealing with his mother who apparently has agreed to see a psychologist. Upon having regained his attention, the doctor tells Caesar that he'd like to refer her to see a psychiatrist, to find out if perhaps a prescription for psychotropic drugs would help. Caesar frowns upon hearing this and asks what the two of them have been discussing.



WEDNESDAY

A young boy garbed in camouflage gear is hunting wild boar through the subtropical brush. While tracking the animal, the preteen finds himself along the bank of a lake where he spots “JESUS CHRIST!” walking across the water. Approaching him with a friendly smile, Christ politely asks (with an English accent) the befuddled youngster for his rifle and begins examining its craftsmanship.

LITTLE HUNTER: How come ya got a British accent?

JESUS CHRIST: Well, you don’t speak Aramaic, do you?

LITTLE HUNTER: Uh, no.

JESUS CHRIST: There you are. *(He points the rifle up towards a nearby tree branch, and aims the barrel at a little bird.)* Such imagination. *(He lowers the gun.)* Tell me something. Do I look odd to you, holding this?

LITTLE HUNTER: Yeah.

JESUS CHRIST: What a smart, young man you are. I thought so, too. *(The New Testament hero effortlessly breaks the weapon over his knee and magically reveals a fishing rod out of thin air—appearing to have plucked it off the branch of a tree. He holds the latter object out to the boy.)* Now take this. *(The Little Hunter complies, still in awe.)* And remember, you must always obey me above all others; you must practice tolerance with thy father and mother, for they know not always what they do; and if I can forgive all who ask for it, so must you.

With a pat on the head and a promise to recycle the broken rifle, Christ takes his leave.

LITTLE HUNTER: But, I'm allergic to fish. *(He follows after Christ.)* Um, that gun cost me two-hundred dollars— *(The Little Hunter frowns and starts getting angry. He runs up ahead of Christ and stands in his way, withdrawing a small pocketbook.)* Now look here, you long-bearded tree-hugger. This here's the United States Constitution. It says I got a right to bear arms.

JESUS CHRIST: But, my child—

LITTLE HUNTER: Don't you patronize me. DADDY!

The boy's father and hunting partner appears immediately, and quickly recognizes the remains of his son's rifle in Christ's possession.

BIG HUNTER: Nobody's taking away my guns.

He shoots Christ at point-blank range. Unscathed, Christ spreads his arms and frowns at the man.

CHILD TV AD ANNOUNCER *(voiceover):* What would *he* do? ... This ad is brought to you by All the Little Democrats.

Ardie and Titty are sitting in a Latin cafeteria in Miami International Airport with her carry-on baggage beside her, watching the advertisement on a wall-mounted, flat-screen television. They're both finishing up their ham croquette sandwiches.

TITTY: What the hell was that? Man, fuck that shit. That just made me wanna go bustin' caps more now than ever.

ARDIE: You know, I think that might have been the— (*Ardie notices the time on the wall clock.*) Oh, we got to go.

Ardie and Titty casually make their way towards the security checkpoint, to access her assigned gate. And he follows along, beside her, in the waiting line.

Titty admits to having failed to “hook up” Ardie with someone during her stay; to which he immediately retorts that she did better than that by hooking him up with the enthusiasm for moving ahead with his entrepreneurial pursuits (as originally persuaded by Caesar). He also shares “a little secret” with her, saying that he’s been convinced for the last few years that he would find whomever he’s meant to be with traveling along the same career path he’d decide upon taking. He reasons also that he needs to first cultivate something inside him that will make him worthy of love, outside of “just being nice”, so that he may recognize his own value for himself.

TITTY: Dude, why didn't you just fuckin' tell me you wanted to keep your dick in a knot? Was it because I never asked?

ARDIE: No, but I just thought it'd be more fun to see what you would do. (*Titty frowns, and then smiles.*)

TITTY: You dork. We are talkin' about finding the right girl, right?

ARDIE: Yeah, of course. Why?

TITTY: No, nothin'. Just wanna make sure. Just in case I wanna hook you up anyway, when it's your turn to visit.

Ardie laughs. He then tells Titty that he loves both her and Freddy.

TITTY: Aw. But you haven't even met him yet, goofball.

ARDIE: Well, I know enough to see that he makes you happy. And that he really loves you, so I love him too.

Ardie reasons the same for Caesar, based upon how much he really cares for his mom.

TITTY: I don't know about that ass-clown, but I get what you're sayin'.

Nearing the checkpoint, unable to follow her further, Ardie hugs Titty goodbye, which she returns, affectionately, along with a peck on the cheek. She tells him that she's got "a little something" to give him, since he's decided upon "waitin' to get some." Drawing back, she grabs him by the shoulders and gives her cousin a big pop kiss, completely stunning him. She then raises a finger, emphasizing her warning.

TITTY: But just so you don't get any dumb ideas about me.

Titty playfully slaps him across the face, just a little too hard.

ARDIE: Ow! Goddamn it!

TITTY: Oops. Sorry. *(She nervously giggles.)* Yee-hee-hee. Guess I got carried away there.

His cousin bids him “so long, ya handsome devil”, before passing through security without harassment (today’s transportation security officers personal tastes seems reserved for muscular men and the excessively overweight). With a mischievous grin, Titty looks back to wave good-bye one last time; and Ardie returns the gesture with a smile while shaking his head.

* * *

Switching on his car radio, Ardie catches the tail end of an advertisement.

RADIO AD ANNOUNCER: The rest of the world has clearly made its choice. Isn’t it about time you make yours? Choice Bank. From Spokane to Afghanistan, you’ll find us *everywhere*.

Ardie spots Sylvester upon leaving the airport and offers him a lift by quietly and emotionlessly unlocking the passenger-side door for him. Sylvester is all smiles and delighted to see his son. Almost immediately, he begins making excuses for himself.

SYLVESTER: You’ve got to always remember that family is the most important thing in the world, no matter what.

Sylvester advises Ardie that he needs to take advantage of his “mom’s boyfriend’s connections” while “he’s still into her”. He quickly adds on top of this that Fawn’s lies were amusing and that she was sometimes very entertaining, but that he’s “really sorry” for causing Naomi so much trouble, and for blaming her for his own faults. Now, with Fawn out of “his hair”, he realizes that it is to both his and Ardie’s benefit that his son seek Caesar’s mentorship, which, he believes,

could lead towards a great deal of wealth to purchase power. Sylvester hasn't the inkling of an idea what to do with this supposed power; he just likes the idea of having it.

SLYVESTER: Hey, remember when you and I saw Superman together, and you asked me what I would do if I could turn back time, like he does at the end? You need to think big like that again, champ.

ARDIE: I don't have any recollection of that. In fact, I don't remember watching or doing anything ever with you.

SLYVESTER: Huh. Maybe I've got you mixed up with somebody else.

Sylvester apologizes again, but Ardie tells him that it's okay. Before reaching an underpass, Ardie pulls over to the side of the road and steps out of the car. He thanks his father for his greedy and "despicable advice", as well as for having stepped out of his life early enough to have relieved him the burden of shame he would have inherited by toting him around. He then has 12-year-old Ardie rapidly drive Sylvester across the median and towards a speeding semi-truck.

* * *

A giggling little girl with a squirt gun slides down a bright red tube at a playground in a community park. Waiting for her at the bottom is a small boy with his own water pistol, waiting to soak her. Landing on her feet, she goes chasing after him, and together they run around a group of envious and excessively-supervised children, while spraying one another. Sitting on a bench and smiling at them while

sewing a garment is Ardie's Redheaded Woman, looking no older than she did, six years ago.

An unshaven and nervously distraught Tony has been waiting here to meet with Caesar. Upon spotting him, Caesar becomes infuriated by his appearance.

CAESAR: What the hell did you— Look at you! You look ridiculous! You look like you ran off the set of one of my ex-wife's crummy soap-operas!

TONY (*on the verge of crying*): I killed Claire. She wasn't even yelling at me.

Caesar's eyes grow wide, and then just as quickly he decides to play it safe.

CAESAR: You know what? I'm sorry. Somehow I only caught something about Claire yelling. I've had a lot on my mind, lately. However, I think that you two really need to be seeking either psychological or legal counseling.

TONY: I'm too old to go to jail.

CAESAR: Oh, please, stop being so melodramatic. It's disgusting! I've just about had it with all this sudden lack of manhood running rampant everywhere! You're behaving like a godforsaken peasant! You ought to know better! You're 54!

Not far away, the police sergeant from the previous day is strolling by, accompanied by a rookie officer, when he suddenly spots Caesar and hails to him.

Tony, almost immediately, panics and flees. His reaction naturally arouses the sergeant's suspicion and he orders his younger partner to run after the fool.

While the rookie goes chasing after Tony, having to dodge the water-drenched youngsters, he himself gets squirted from above by a radio controlled flying saucer with a small, plastic alien character seated behind its little cannon; a faint, crazed robotic laugh is being emitted upon firing.

ROOKIE OFFICER: Bro! What the fuck!

As the flying saucer follows after the rookie—only to wind up losing its receiver's signal and crash into a tree—Caesar and the police sergeant are delighted to see one another, behaving like old chums. Upon being asked why he's working outside of his district the sergeant tells Caesar that the cuts and changes being made by both the new mayor and the governor, as well as "their cronies", are frightening senior officers into early retirement, so as to keep some of their benefits. As a result, the sergeant's taking all the extra work he can find.

CAESAR: Yes, I know. I've been reading about that. But didn't you all get something like a 13 percent raise last year? (*The sergeant is flabbergasted.*) Doesn't that help to balance out with what they want to take away now? I mean for you, at least.

POLICE SERGEANT: What are you talking about? Where are you reading this crap? Besides that, look at what those bastards in the fire department are making? They get paid to sleep. Give me a break.

CAESAR: You know, maybe I am getting my stories mixed up. I have had a lot on my mind, lately.

POLICE SERGEANT: I'm not saying that the last guy wasn't a crooked Julio, but at least he was on our side. Anyway, why get into it? There's nothing we can do about it except make ourselves sick. Hey, we've got to get together soon and catch up, man. It's great to see you, you know? Maybe we can meet up for drinks and pick up a few girls, huh? Aren't there more divorced women now more than ever?

CAESAR: Drinks sound great, but if there's going to be women involved you're liable to wind up with more than you can handle. You may not believe this, coming from me, but I've fallen in love.

POLICE SERGEANT: Hey, no kidding? That's fantastic! In that case, we could have a couples' night out. You could meet my wife. *(He frowns.)* No, on second thought, maybe I'll bring somebody else.

CAESAR: But, Pete, I thought you and Nancy were doing great. What happened?

POLICE SERGEANT: Pete? Alan, I'm Mike.

Tony is being tasered by the rookie just as both Caesar and the sergeant are having themselves a good laugh over their having mistaken one another for friends. They continue laughing aloud about "what stress can do to you" just as the young officer is escorting Tony back their way. Upon hearing Caesar and the sergeant, Tony immediately becomes convinced that they're laughing at him.

TONY: I knew it. You greedy, backstabbing son-of-a-bitch!

With his hands cuffed behind his back, Tony tries fruitlessly to lunge forward in an attempt to bite Caesar. The sergeant orders the rookie to take him to their squad car, and tells him that he'll be right behind him.

POLICE SERGEANT: What was your friend running away for, anyway? What the hell is wrong with him?

CAESAR: To tell you the truth, I haven't the faintest idea. The moment he saw you and your partner he simply snapped.

POLICE SERGEANT: Heh. I wouldn't doubt it has something to do with what that fat cow is saying on Channel 4. She's turning everyone against us. Well, I better go check on my partner, just in case your friend actually did something. We've got to cover our butts, you know?

CAESAR: Oh, I completely understand. But before you go, I must beg to differ with you about that woman on Channel 4. I would argue that she is voluptuous, but definitely not fat. I think I've been with enough women to know the difference. And I have no trouble in saying that for most of my adult life that was my favorite part of a woman's body.

POLICE SERGEANT: Well, alright. Look, I know. You're right. I'm simply talking out of spite. So what happened? How come you lost your taste for a big ass? What? Did you get into feet, or somethin'?

CAESAR: Oh, I simply love women's feet.

POLICE SERGEANT: You know what? Me too! And I don't get it. What is it about them? You think it's something psychological? Like the foundation of— Oh, I don't know. Who am I kidding?

CAESAR: Well, I'm not sure exactly. Except, maybe it's simply another pleasant arrangement of geometrical shapes that's recognized by something in the brain to stimulate reproduction. But to answer your first question, I think my ex-wife traumatized me.

POLICE SERGEANT: Wait. Don't tell me. She's from one of these South American countries, isn't she?

CAESAR: As a matter of fact, yes. Good guess. She's Colombian.

POLICE SERGEANT: You see? I knew it. They're all a bunch of piranhas with ass-lifts. That's just the way they're brought up. They can't help it. Think about it. All their lives they're taught that men adore them for how they look, and so that's all they care about. *(Caesar shakes his head, disagreeing.)* Honestly, outside of bed, I didn't enjoy the company of any of my wives. And I've been with four of them now. Well, actually, I should say that I've been married to three of them. The fourth one is this Peruvian I've been seeing, but lately she's really starting to piss me off. My wife, though—the one I'm married to now—she's Venezuelan. That's another nightmare.

CAESAR: Well, let's not generalize. Naturally, if we treat them a certain way, how do you expect for them to react? I'll be honest with you, I consider myself very fortunate to have found my girlfriend.

POLICE SERGEANT (*cynically*): Uh-huh.

CAESAR (*cont.*): Not to say that I'm not glad that there are plenty of promiscuous women out there. By no means is there anything wrong with trying out different partners, because it definitely took me a while to find the right one. And you know something? Ten years ago, I don't think I would have appreciated her as much.

POLICE SERGEANT: Yeah, let's see how long that lasts. Is she Hispanic?

CAESAR: No, she's Anglo.

POLICE SERGEANT: Oh, well, in that case you might get lucky.

CAESAR: You're being dishonest with yourself. Every group has its good and bad apples, but you can't mistake some for all.

POLICE SERGEANT: You mean like one of those little polls, which I've never in my life been called for?

CAESAR (*making a sour face*): Oh, those figures are an insult to one's intelligence.

POLICE SERGEANT: On that, we're a 100 percent agreed. They're all the same. No matter what channel you watch. Everyone tells you a sliver of truth.

CAESAR: They have to.

POLICE SERGEANT: Hey, I'm just curious. Do you mind me asking what your politics are?

CAESAR: Not at all. I've been a registered Republican for most of my life, until only recently, when I realized that I belonged on the other side.

POLICE SERGEANT: That's incredible. I just came from the complete opposite direction last year.

CAESAR: Heh, you mark my words, you'll wise up to all the contradictions and hypocrisies.

POLICE SERGEANT: That's so funny. I was just about to tell you the same exact thing!

* * *

Ardie is sitting cozily on the living room sofa, reading Caesar's copy of *Think and Grow Rich*, while his mother is seated nearby, mending a tear in the shirt he wore today. Naomi quietly tells him she's expecting Caesar to come by at any moment.

Upon Caesar's arrival, Ardie lets him know that he's decided to major in economics and business, and wishes to accept his offer to go under his tutelage.

Caesar, who is taking Naomi out for a romantic evening, is very pleased to hear this.

CAESAR: By the way, Ardie, where's your car?

ARDIE: Oh, I left it overnight with my mechanic.

CAESAR: Is there something wrong with it?

ARDIE: No, it's just getting a full tune-up in the morning. It's easier for him to get started early, and for the engine not to be hot.

Upon inquiring about Tony, Caesar announces that "unfortunately, [his] friend" is going to be going away for a while.

* * *

Caesar has reasoned with Emmanuel to do business with the Chinese, so that he may retire comfortably, and he tells Tony this bit of information while visiting him in prison. Tony understandably goes mad, laughing maniacally.

* * *

With musical accompaniment by the drums traditionally played on Good Friday in the Spanish town of Calanda, Tony leads a mob made up of anonymous Wall Street agents and executives, along with look-alike historical (mostly 20th Century) religious and political figures, as well as banking and industrial magnates, all towards a tall, black iron gate. Breaking through, Tony and a handful of others

take up some of the iron bars to use as spears, and everyone goes running up a giant stairway boulevard.

Approaching them from over a hundred meters up ahead, and thus halting their advance and paralyzing them with terror, is the blurry, highway mirage image of an army of hairy, excessively macho, winged angels. Leading them is a large, muscular white-bearded, olive skinned male wearing a white bathrobe with a gold-colored belt; walking beside him is a cocky dwarf in a suit, wearing a polished pair of dress shoes and Emmanuel's head as his own. (Everyone else is barefoot.)³

THE BIG CUBAN—as his dialect reveals—addresses everyone in his native language (with subtitles). LITTLE EMMANUEL, also, only speaks Spanish.

THE BIG CUBAN: Let's see. Who brought coffee?

Two angels waiting in the wings, who apparently haven't seen each other for some time, strike up a conversation. One of them is so impressed by his comrade's biceps that his friend encourages him to feel them.

MACHO ANGEL 1 (*Cuban Spanish, subtitled*): Hey, papí, you got strong.

Look at that.

With two of his crew having unknowingly become the center of attention, the Big Cuban throws a fit.

THE BIG CUBAN: Hey! Knock it off, you fairies! Can't you see we have visitors? (*The guilty party attempts to apologize, but the Big Cuban has*

had it with his entourage.) What's more, all of you get lost! I swear you guys drive me crazy every time you jump on top of me whenever somebody so much as blows a fart in this place! Go on! Beat it!

His feathered bodyguards whine about injustice as they turn around to leave him with his mortal visitors. Only LITTLE EMMANUEL is permitted to remain at his side.

MULATTO ANGEL (*Cuban Spanish, subtitled*): Damn, man. I barely remember the last time I was in a good fight.

MACHO ANGEL 3 (*Cuban Spanish, subtitled*): Hey, why don't we go pick up some chicks and give them some flying lessons?

MULATTO ANGEL (*Cuban Spanish, subtitled*): Ay, chico, how many times are we going to do the same shit?

Both the Big Cuban and the humbled mob all seem to be sharing a sigh of relief. Once again, he gives them his full attention.

THE BIG CUBAN: Alright, let's move on. Before you attempt to murder me and have a ton of people cursing the mothers who gave birth to all of you, wouldn't it be good idea to ask me a few questions, like, I don't know, why I made everything?

Members of his audience exchange looks with one another, before someone finally says something. (Each look-alike historical and present-day figure is garbed

in their most recognizable attire; for example, FRANCISCO FRANCO's double is dressed as a military general.)

FRANCISCO FRANCO (*Castilian, subtitled*): I would very much like to understand your reasoning, O Lord.

VOICE IN THE CROWD (*in a rough Castilian accent, subtitled*): Oh, just wash his feet and paint his nails already!

THE BIG CUBAN: LUIS! How many times am I going to repeat myself?! I've already told you that I don't want you here! Go back where you belong, right now! *¡Me cago en die', coño!*

The mob watches someone dressed up as a Catholic nun leave their numbers and childishly zigzag back down towards the busted gate.

THE BIG CUBAN: Okay, we're off to a bad start, but what choice do I have? Anyway, I came prepared to hold your hand throughout our little talk. What's more, that's partly the reason why I decided to meet you here. I'm here to help your little group. And I'm also here to tell you that, up until now, you all have been doing a good job.

Little Emmanuel mischievously smiles and nods his head in agreement. The entire mob is dumbstruck.

THE BIG CUBAN: Hey, it's true. Look, if it wasn't for you, way too many people wouldn't do a quarter-dick of what needs to get done. Sometimes you have to be a son-of-a-bitch. Obviously, I don't mean to

call your mothers a bunch of sluts, but ambition and ruthlessness helps move those lazy shits forward. Not all the time, but sometimes. However, I think you need me to occasionally remind you just how much we need each other.

MOTHER TERESA: Yes! Praise God!

THE BIG CUBAN: Go on. Just like that, old woman. Let's not forget that distractions and entertainment will always be the best policy for curving their imaginations. They're always going to be wondering if there is anything worth a shit for them at the end of their miserable lives. And there are way too many of them for you to stop financing the idea that life is nothing more than doing whatever the hell you say, in exchange for keeping them away from each other for your own safety—contrary, of course, to what you want them to believe—and for the opportunity of living carefree in some vague, eternal afterlife. Otherwise they're going to start venturing off and inventing on their own to find out what the point of it all really is. Now, there will always be a few strays. And you need to continue picking them out and putting them to good use before they get the chance of making a real mess of things.

MAO TSE-TUNG (*Xiang Chinese, subtitled*): Yes, well, personally I always thought the idea of heaven and hell sounded like a lot of garbage.

THE BIG CUBAN: What a tremendous genius this Chinaman is. Did everybody hear what *Mamao*¹ just said? You don't have to be Einstein

¹The usage here is slang for "cock sucker".

to be able to spot a metaphor. It's incredible how they could possibly think that someone with the ability to put so much detail and effort into everything would also have the stupid idea of gambling your souls with a one-dimensional figment of their imagination. How can anybody be so retarded? It sounds like a soap opera on cable. Man, I'm telling you.

BUSINESS EXECUTIVE 1: Which show is that?

THE BIG CUBAN: I'm giving you the idea, dumb-ass.

BUSINESS EXECUTIVE 2: Somebody got a pen? Write it down!

AUGUSTO PINOCHET (*Spanish, subtitled*): Excuse me, sir? Are you saying there's no heaven?

THE BIG CUBAN: Oh, you can just forget about that one. You won't be going there. And what's more, nobody else will, either. Do you know why? Because the juice isn't worth the squeeze. I tried seeing what your so-called paradise would be like once. And, yeah, of course, everybody was happy-go-lucky, because nobody had to do shit. It was like a kibbutz on LSD, with all the work done for you. There were little balloons everywhere, and you'd see people flying in and out of here like Peter Pan. We even sang songs around the campfire, and made lots of love, like the hippies—I still got the Beatles coming out of my ass! We'd laugh ourselves to sleep every night, even though we didn't need to rest. Well, like all other excesses, obviously you can guess what happened with that

little experiment? *(He loses his patience at his audience's lack of feedback.)* We all got bored as shit!

Emmanuel's two young, would-be assassins make their way to the front of the crowd.

WOULD-BE JIHADIST 1 *(Arabic, subtitled)*: Hey, where are the virgins?

ABDULLAH OF SAUDI ARABIA *(Arabic, subtitled)*: You're fucking with me. There are virgins here? Where?

THE BIG CUBAN: Oh, come on, son. You think I'm not going to attend to satisfying men and women up here?

PAT ROBERTSON *(speaking to Yasser Arafat)*: Now how would you interpret what he just said? *(Arafat grins and shrugs his shoulders.)*

WOULD-BE JIHADIST 2 *(Arabic, subtitled)*: But doesn't the Qur'an promise 72 virgins for every man. *(He turns to his friend for confirmation.)* It's 72, right?

THE BIG CUBAN: Did you actually read that in the Qur'an?

WOULD-BE JIHADIST 2 *(Arabic, subtitled)*: Well, no. But—

THE BIG CUBAN *(returning to address the entire audience)*: You see what I'm telling you? Look, just put this in your head. As long as opposing armies are discouraged from meeting out on the battlefield where they're gonna disentangle their orders, join forces, enlighten the

masses, bring law enforcement into their fold, sever the heads of the largest 3 percent of corporate investors, mail your heads to your agents and representatives in government, frighten them out of office, display their corpses like Vlad the Impaler, burn all your flags, unite into one nation, hook up with those funny-looking perverts in outer space, and finally become an asset to the rest of the universe— Well, so long as you prevent the first one from happening—because there is no other way that they’re going to be able to organize a revolution, without you slipping their leaders a few bucks—then everything might continue to work out in your favor. For a little while longer, anyway. And now I’m dizzy. Midget, give me a glass of water, *chico*. *(He looks down at Little Emmanuel, who has a golden goblet ready for him.)*

LITTLE EMMANUEL: Here you go, boss.

THE BIG CUBAN: Oh, thank you.

Adolf Hitler raises his hand, requesting permission to speak.

THE BIG CUBAN *(draining his cup)*: Mm. Nobody gives a fuck for what you have to say, Adolfo. So just keep quiet before I smack you. We all know it’s true that partly thanks to you we all keep making a shitload of money. But to tell you the truth, I don’t feel like listening to you right now. *(Hitler lowers his hand and frowns; his shoulders droop. The Big Cuban resumes addressing the mob.)* Now, I have to tell you, lately you guys have been getting a little sloppy covering your tracks. And with all the *tiki-tiki* on the internet, you can’t always afford to take such careless

risks. Gentlemen, you won't always get away with bullshit like collapsing three buildings with two planes.

Somewhere inside a little apartment, near the race track in Hialeah, two little boys are playing with their toy cars and planes. Propped up in between them are two tall buildings, as well as one short one, made up of wooden blocks. One of the boys flies his plastic plane past one of the taller buildings, and somehow—perhaps by careless construction—the little building below crumbles apart. Their mother just so happens to be nearby.

HIALEAH MOM (*Spanish, subtitled*): Kids, that's not funny.

HIALEAH BOY 1 (*whining in English*): It just fell by itself.

Returning upstairs, the mob bursts into laughter, save for the two wannabe Jihadists, who apparently don't get it. Two Wall Street suits (HIGH-RISK INVESTORS 1 and 2) share a high five with a "Cha-ching!" and a "Now that's a fire!"

THE BIG CUBAN (*to himself*): I didn't find that funny at all.

A decrepit FIDEL CASTRO suddenly pushes his way to the front of the crowd. Highly disorientated, he mechanically salutes while gathering his bearings.

FIDEL CASTRO (*Spanish, subtitled*): Where the fuck am I?

WOULD-BE JIHADIST 1 (*Arabic, subtitled*): Yeah, so why are we all here then?

THE BIG CUBAN: Well, now that my partner just walked thru the door—

LITTLE EMMANUEL (*to Castro*): Better get your ass ready, old man.

THE BIG CUBAN (*cont.*): I'm gonna try to put this as delicately as possible. Just before you die, it might occur to you that you've just had a series of experiences which have affected and contributed towards the experiences of others. Regardless of whether it seemed like a fucking nightmare or a mixed bag to you, everyone records something different. Naturally, what causes the most changes, and thereby creates even more series of possibilities, depends entirely upon your actions, which helps set the stage for what the next group is going to react to. What may not or could not have been possible to have experienced amongst you becomes possible to experience amongst those that follow you. Therefore, what was impossible becomes possible, which always leads to discovering something new. And every new piece of information is collected—and, yes, sometimes hoarded—which, like I said, contributes to the next combination of experiences.

WOULD-BE JIHADIST 1 (*Arabic, subtitled*): But where does it all lead to? How does it end? Do you know?

THE BIG CUBAN: Of course, *chico*. For those of you who don't like spoilers, you may want to cover your ears. It ends, of course, with the most impossible sounding experience of all: boy meets girl, boy falls in love with girl, girl likes the look of his ass, both have a screaming climax, boy writes her a song, every atom in the universe sings along, everything

becomes undone, and upon regrouping into one— Well, end of story.
For you people, anyway.

J. P. MORGAN: Who the hell are you?

THE BIG CUBAN: Well, now that I've fucked up the ending for you, I might as well tell you the beginning.

The scene switches to a place of utter darkness.

THE BIG CUBAN (*voice over*): Solitude has its good things, but without the means of obtaining information outside of your tiny space, it gets to a point where it becomes absolutely boring.

A bioluminescent, insect-winged creature zips forward (towards someone's point-of-view), and reveals itself to be a petite, voluptuous female-like humanoid, lacking genitalia. It has come to report (with a little girl's voice) to a much larger creature that resembles a human fetus in its early stages (and which also bears a small child's voice, yet whose lips do not move). (Their conversation is entirely in Spanish, and is subtitled.)

THE BIG CUBAN (*voice over, cont.*): When you're in the dark, and some noise is driving you crazy, it helps to have a little light to see what the hell is going on. And so I called this light "*Cocuyo*".² And she was good.

Cocuyo smiles and grabs her feet, playing with them.

² Spanish for the glowing click beetle.

BABY CUBAN: Were you able to find out what that thing is that shows up, once in a while, and tickles my feet?

COCUYO: From what I've gathered that's your father. I don't think he lives around here, but he does stop by to visit you and your mother, which she seems to really, really like.

BABY CUBAN: Aw. Well then the next time he comes I'm gonna pet him, to show him that I love him.

COCUYO (*perplexed*): Well, okay. Yeah, I think he might like that.

BABY CUBAN: What's more, you know what? I'm gonna do that and give him a big kiss too.

COCUYO: Gee, I don't know. There's something there that doesn't sound right. You don't think that's going a little overboard?

Returning to the present, JOSEF MENGELE challenges the Big Cuban's story.

JOSEF MENGELE (*English; German accent*): As a man of science, who had the opportunity of working with many babies, I find it very difficult to believe that the father's penis could disturb the unborn child within its mother's womb. It's not impossible, but—

JOHN D. ROCKEFELLER, SR. (*as an old man*): Yes, but you are forgetting. This is not a man we are speaking about, Herr Mengele. This is the Holy Father.

JOSEF MENGELE (*English; German accent*): You are quite right. As a non-believer, I did not take this into consideration. Naturally, his anatomy must be quite different from our own. How I would love to peel his skin off and study what's inside.

Fidel Castro appears to be speaking his thoughts aloud while looking at no one in particular. He raises his eyebrows and gestures with his hands, expressing skepticism.

FIDEL CASTRO (*Spanish, subtitled*): Hey, don't tell anyone, but that sounds to me like a "Chinese tale".

MAO TSE-TUNG (*Xiang Chinese, subtitled*): Are you sure? I've never heard that one before.

TONY: Wait a minute! You mean— (*The Big Cuban begins whistling Row, Row, Row Your Boat to help him out.*) I'm talking to myself?

THE BIG CUBAN: Well, what do you want me to do for nine months in the womb? Play with myself? And I'm praying that it's just nine months. Because if it's not, and it's a hell of a lot more, I'm gonna go crazy, and I'm gonna start busting walls!

FRANKLIN D. ROOSEVELT: I say, do you know what's out there?

THEODORE ROOSEVELT: You read my mind, cousin. I was just about to ask the same thing.

THE BIG CUBAN (*to both Roosevelts*): Do you assholes think if I knew that I'd be standing here talking to myself? (*He readdresses everyone.*) Look, all I can say for sure is that that racket my mom listens to makes me want to go to the bathroom. And you know what? That's another good example as to how something bad—like some of the limitations you've placed on people—can fuel the desire for something good, which may otherwise never come to exist. So there it is. What do you think? Don't you all feel better about yourselves?

DICK CHENEY: Well, I don't know about you fellas, but having told many a tall tale in my day, that sounds like a lame story to me.

RUPERT MURDOCH (*Australian English*): Hear, hear. That sounds like the product of a lazy imagination.

PRINCE BERNHARD OF THE NETHERLANDS (*Dutch, subtitled*): Yes, quite clearly to be originating from a member of the lower classes.

ABDEL HAKIM BELHAJ (*Arabic, subtitled*): Yeah, yeah! I'm with you guys!

The Big Cuban looks down at Little Emmanuel.

THE BIG CUBAN: You were right. They're much too greedy. Drinks are on me.

LITTLE EMMANUEL: You see? I told you so.

THE BIG CUBAN: Yeah, alright, now shut up. *(He gives his full attention back to the crowd.)* You're much too clever for me! It's true. I'm just fucking with you. You're all going straight to hell, so kiss my ass!

TONY: Enough of this bullshit. Let's kill him! *(Cheers of approval ring out, and the charge begins anew.)*

THE BIG CUBAN: Well, let's enjoy ourselves a little, no? Dwarf, the sticks. *(His aide withdraws a finely crafted pair of nunchaku from an inner coat pocket.)* You know, I'm not much of a fanatic of the use of music during the action in movies. Sometimes it just interferes and rubs off on me the wrong way. But to tell you the truth, when I'm lifting weights and I have my tunes on, it's a lot more fun. So you know what? Fuck it. *(He snaps his fingers.)*

Emmanuel remains holding his choice of weapon for him while from out of nowhere (or, rather everywhere) a rendition of Johnny Pate's *Shaft in Africa (Addis)* begins to play, rising in volume.

The Big Cuban removes his robe and unveils a symmetrically-perfect, muscular physique (presented at first, from the waist up). He stretches, cracks his knuckles, flexes his pectoral muscles to make them bounce (just to show off) and then jumps in place, like a boxer, revealing the possession of a jumbo-sized male sex organ. He is completely nude.

ADOLF HITLER *(German, subtitled):* Oh, no.

The Big Cuban takes the nunchaku from Emmanuel and charges down the steps to precede slicing through everyone, moving his body and spinning the weapon both with superhuman speed; his excessive Bruce Lee mannerisms—or more specifically, his blending of Dragon Lee and Naked City’s vocalist, Yamataka Eye—are performed with great gusto. Bypassing only Castro and the two would-be Jihadists, he sends a few of his opponents soaring through the air (and all without use of slow-motion photography). In the process, Tony gets knocked over by a flying Winston Churchill.

Tearing off J.P. Morgan’s purple, diseased nose, the Big Cuban then obliterates what’s left of his head by smashing it against John D. Rockefeller’s. Looking about the carnage he’s caused, the Big Cuban notices only four figures remaining, which include the two wannabe Jihadists, as well as a man and a woman; the latter two are to be his next targets.

ERNESTO “CHE” GUEVARA appears to have been purposely hanging back, waiting his turn for some one-on-one combat. He’s smoking a cigar, appearing completely at ease.

ERNESTO “CHE” GUEVARA (*Spanish, subtitled*): You want to mess with me now? (*He calmly takes the cigar out of his mouth and drops it to the ground.*) Come on, faggot.

THE BIG CUBAN: There is nothing sexier than a man with a big pair of balls like you. Unfortunately, for the both of us, I already promised to hand that scrumptious ass of yours over to someone else. *Midget?*

Little Emmanuel comes hurtling through the air and lifts Guevara up off his feet by the neck with his teeth, gripping onto his hair and shoulder. Spinning above the ground together, Emmanuel drains him of his blood while Guevara screams for his life. The Big Cuban has now to deal with the woman.

Grabbing a pathetic-looking Queen Elizabeth II imposter, he pulls off her latex mask and reveals it to be none other than Tony's wife, Claire. He growls, ferociously.

THE BIG CUBAN: What's the Latin word for "twofold", you bitch?!

CLAIRE: I don't understand a word you're saying! I don't speak Spanish!

Her response makes him angrier.

THE BIG CUBAN: And you live in Miami?!

The Big Cuban thus proceeds to knock out all her teeth by smacking her across the face, from side-to-side, using both ends of the nunchaku. He yells the same word, over and over again, with each hit.

THE BIG CUBAN: Duplex! Duplex! Duplex! Duplex!

Dropping her to the floor, he then pees into her lifeless mouth. And once through relieving himself he spits on her face. At that moment, Little Emmanuel is also spitting (blood) on Guevara's corpse.

LITTLE EMMANUEL: That's what happens to you when you mess with the "Cuban Mafia". And what's more, I'm *Jewish!*

At last, the Big Cuban has left to attend to the two young wannabe Jihadists, both of whom are scared stiff.

THE BIG CUBAN: Now, as for you two...

WOULD-BE JIHADIST 2 (*Arabic, subtitled*): We're sorry! We're sorry!

WOULD-BE JIHADIST 1 (*Arabic, subtitled*): Yeah, what do you want from us? We're fighting for our lives every day! It's us or them!

THE BIG CUBAN: I understand it all. Believe me I've heard it billions of times. And there is nothing these degenerates want more than for you all to keep fueling the fire, which they lit up, between you. Of course, this has been happening everywhere around the world, ever since one little brat failed to get spanked. But don't worry, because that party is about to end. I'm fed up with it, already. My dick's gotten swollen from always dealing with the same shit. Anyway, I've decided to send you both back as that poor Israeli woman's soon-to-be born twins. I'm referring to the one whose baby you killed, for no good reason.

WOULD-BE JIHADIST 2 (*Arabic, subtitled*): You must be joking! Why?!

THE BIG CUBAN: Do you really want to get on my nerves? You want to piss me off?

WOULD-BE JIHADIST 2 (*Arabic, subtitled*): I can be Jewish. I can be Jewish.

WOULD-BE JIHADIST 1 (*Arabic, subtitled*): Wait a minute, but they took our land!

WOULD-BE JIHADIST 2 (*Arabic, subtitled*): Yeah, and they didn't even pay us.

WOULD-BE JIHADIST 1 (*Arabic, subtitled*): Whose side are you on, anyway?

THE BIG CUBAN: Now look here, are you two retarded? What's wrong with you? Did you not listen to a word I said to those S.O.B.'s?

WOULD-BE JIHADIST 2 (*Arabic, subtitled*): I've got ADD.

WOULD-BE JIHADIST 1 (*Arabic, subtitled*): Wasn't it all just bullshit?

THE BIG CUBAN: You know what? Who gives a fuck? What difference does it make? You're not going to remember a thing I tell you, anyway. But if it makes you feel any better, your next lives will inspire whores all over the world, whose children will save a ton of weak and tired people. Now, follow the rabbi.

With a gesture he directs their attention towards a lovely, pale-skinned young woman with long curled sidelocks, standing at the side of the road. She licks her index finger and turns around to bend over while lifting up her skirt with her other hand. Whatever she does next causes the boys to forget all their cares, as they go running after her. Smiling, she stands up straight and runs off herself, to lure them away.

WOULD-BE JIHADIST 1 (*Arabic, subtitled*): I knew it! There's a god after all!

THE BIG CUBAN: Go on, get her! And wait till you see her cousin! You're gonna flip! (*The Big Cuban turns to speak to Little Emmanuel.*) Hey, midget? Let me borrow your phone for a minute. I need to talk to "the nurse". I can't handle it anymore. (*Little Emmanuel withdraws a cell phone from his back pocket and hands it to him. The Big Cuban then raises it to his face, and squints while trying to read the numbers.*) Chico, give me the glasses. I can't read shit. These numbers are so tiny...

Little Emmanuel complies with a gentle sigh, withdrawing a pair of black reading glasses from an inner pocket.

The scene changes to re-present Cocuyo. She is now a voluptuous, young woman who causes traffic and near fatal collisions wherever she goes; she even makes little old ladies turn their heads. Strolling through Little Havana, she passes by two mulatto males, causing them both to stop in their tracks.

MULATTO PEDESTRIAN (*Spanish, subtitled*): Damn, *mamita!* May God bless you!

Laughing, she cheerfully answers her cell phone; the ringer is playing *Los Limones (The Lemons)* by Conjunto Impacto. (Their entire conversation, which is presented by switching locales back and forth, is in Spanish and is subtitled.)

COCUYO: Hello?

THE BIG CUBAN (*removing his glasses*): Cocuyo! How you doin', baby girl? Hey, you've been missing.

COCUYO: Look who's talking. I, at least, stay on the same planet.

THE BIG CUBAN: Well, that's true. Hey, I've haven't seen you since we went together to go see Victor Manuelle in concert. Remember that? How when we both started dancing, and you started tearing it up? Damn, girl, you always had it going on! Hey, so how are you feeling, my love? Are you behaving badly?

COCUYO: *Chico*, I always behave badly.

THE BIG CUBAN: That's good. That's good. I'm happy to hear that.

COCUYO: So what's up?

THE BIG CUBAN (*lowering his tone; getting sentimental*): No, I was just thinking about when it was just you and me, and how you would go venturing out for me, and how frustrated you'd get when I wouldn't let you go wondering off too far, because I didn't want to be left all alone. You know, of course, before I realized that I could concentrate and make more little animals. (*He chuckles.*) And, uh, what was I gonna tell you? No, I was just thinking also that, because of you, everything worthwhile started coming together. You know I always have you on my mind, doll.

COCUYO: Aw. And you always had too many “birdies in the head”. (*She giggles and he laughs on the end, as well.*) So what are you doing right now?

THE BIG CUBAN: Me? No, nothing. Just finished clobbering a bunch of people. And now I’m here, all alone, stark naked, thinking about you. (*He pitches a quick glance at Little Emmanuel and childishly raises a finger to his lips, telling him to keep quiet. His aide shakes his head.*) ¿Que bola?

COCUYO: Damn, it sounds like I missed a good show.

THE BIG CUBAN: Don’t worry, I got one better. Wait till I get you. I’m gonna give you such a bite that you’re gonna know what’s good for you.

COCUYO: *Hey.* So, uh, what are you gonna be doing later?

THE BIG CUBAN: Well, I’m gonna step out now to eat something with my buddies, but if you have some time to see me later...

COCUYO (*teasingly*): Well, I don’t know. You know how I’m all over the neighborhood. I got so many people I need to go see.

THE BIG CUBAN (*playing along*): Yeah, but more important than me? Hey, now look here. Be careful. Papa God’s gonna get *mad*.

COCUYO (*chuckling*): You’re so stupid.

THE BIG CUBAN: No, but seriously. I need to see you. And you're going to want to be in on this one. I have a project to show you with a bunch of new ideas that I want to mix, but it needs a woman's touch. And I know you always come well prepared. So, uh, well, so what do you think? *(He frowns, hearing only silence on the other end of the receiver.)* Cocuyo? Hello? Cocuyo? Ah, you've got to kidding me. What shit! I hate it when the line drops and you keep talking to yourself.

LITTLE EMMANUEL: Oh, tell me about it. Know what bothers me even more, though? When someone shakes hands with you, knowing full-well that they're sick.

THE BIG CUBAN: Ah, yeah. I can't stand that, either. But that's a lack of culture.

LITTLE EMMANUEL: No, no. That's a lack of everything. *Eso me cae a mi como una bomba. (The Big Cuban smiles.)*

THE BIG CUBAN: *(teasingly)*: Yeah, but at the same time, old man, you're way too complexed.

LITTLE EMMANUEL *(cracking a smile)*: The nerve of this guy.

They both share a laugh, and the Big Cuban puts his reading glasses back on.

THE BIG CUBAN: Well, I'll get together with her later. *(He mischievously chuckles to himself while trying to send her a text message.)* I don't

know who's the bigger slut, me or her. Hey, so what did you wind up doing with Fidel?

LITTLE EMMANUEL: I'd rather not say.

THE BIG CUBAN: You know what? If you're going to ruin my appetite, then perhaps it's best you don't. You're a bit of a sicko. *(He removes his glasses.)* Anyway, you can always tell me later. Hey, so what are we gonna eat, finally?

LITTLE EMMANUEL: Now we're talking. I'm so hungry I'm dizzy.

The Big Cuban holds the phone and his glasses out to Emmanuel in one hand.

THE BIG CUBAN: Here, hold onto these. I don't have any pockets. Let's go get the boys, so they don't talk shit later.

The Big Cuban leans over to return the two items to Emmanuel when he suddenly pauses; Tony is creeping up behind them, carrying one of the sharp-ended, black iron bars from the front gate. The Big Cuban lowers his voice.

THE BIG CUBAN: Uh-oh, careful. Here comes this dumb-ass. Try to look surprised. Poor guy. They're gonna get him by surprise in prison, too.

LITTLE EMMANUEL: Alright. Ready when you are.

The Big Cuban and Little Emmanuel turn their heads with great enthusiastic sarcasm, revealing partial smiles. Emmanuel places one hand to his cheek for additional dramatic effect.

THE BIG CUBAN & LITTLE EMMANUEL: OHHHHHH!!!

The big guy tilts his butt up, encouraging Tony who skewers him by entering through his backside.

Back at the prison, Tony is yelling at the ceiling.

TONY: I'm gonna get you if it's the last thing I DO!!!

Caesar raises an eyebrow.

CAESAR: Have you lost your mind? Have some pride and dignity, man.
Who are you talking to anyway? I thought we were atheists.

20 YEARS LATER

The Hotel de Bilderstecker is an old inn lying in the countryside, somewhere in Eastern Europe. Ardie, now nearly 40 and greatly resembling a mustached Caesar, is attending an international socioeconomic conference there, which has yet to begin. Parting from the company of a four-star U.S. Army general is a frail, elderly American gentleman who greets Ardie with great friendliness; Ardie addresses him as DAVID. Standing beside Ardie, holding a briefcase, is a young androgynous-looking French woman (with a short hair style), who he introduces as his aide, JEANNE. Ardie's character apparently hasn't changed much, as he is very polite.

DAVID: So, Ardie, how's your partner?

ARDIE (*puzzled*): Do you mean my wife?

DAVID: Your wife! Of course. Pete, uh?

ARDIE: Petra.

DAVID: Petra! Yes! Did she fly in with you?

ARDIE: No. Actually, David, she stayed with her parents in Hamburg.

DAVID: Oh, that's too bad. Will you be coming to my party tonight?

ARDIE: Yes, of course, David. Rest assured, you'll see me there.

DAVID: You know, my great-grandchildren simply love your games. (*He raises a shaky index finger for emphasis.*) And we only let them play the special editions.

ARDIE: Yes, that's very important: only the special editions.

The three of them suddenly notice a crippled old man in an electric wheelchair having trouble entering through a door, where the meeting is to be held. Drooling, he grumbles at the other, much younger guests who offer to assist him.

DAVID (*to Ardie*): You'll excuse me, won't you?

ARDIE: Yes, of course.

David slowly and carefully walks over to help his handicapped friend.

DAVID: Don't worry, Henry! I'm coming!

HENRY (*mumbling, with a German accent*): He who controls the wheelchair controls the world.

Ardie and Jeanne linger behind while a few others unhurriedly follow Henry into the room, upon having managed to enter by himself. Ardie and Jeanne converse entirely in French (with subtitles), as they watch David join the others.

ARDIE: That poor fellow always tells me the same thing every time I see him.

JEANNE: But you're getting what you wanted.

ARDIE: Close enough. He understands my perspective, and that I don't mean him any harm. He couldn't agree with me, even if he wanted to. It's too inconvenient for him. What with the position he's placed himself in, there'd be too many repercussions.

There's a sudden hint of a smile on the otherwise dead serious Jeanne.

JEANNE: Now you're the one repeating yourself.

ARDIE (*smiling*): You're right.

JEANNE: I was beginning to tell you—

ARDIE: Yes?

JEANNE: Thank you for those old books you lent me. I can at least return one of them to you, once we get back to the hotel.

ARDIE: Which one, the Artaud?

JEANNE: No, I still have yet to finish that one. It's the one that analyzes Prometheus and the Persian myth of Lucifer. (*She slightly frowns.*) The title eludes me at the moment. However, I know the former's name is on there.

ARDIE: Ah, yes. It's not a very catchy title. What are your thoughts on it?

JEANNE: Well, I admit that one need not agree with another's ideas to be grounds for dismissing their useful qualities; especially if they can evoke others, which may not be completely correct or sustainable in the long run, either. But, yes, those might wind up provoking yet a third or fourth generation of designs, which might be more resourceful. Also, the necessity of cultivating the efficiency of man's "ten-thousand eyes", as the author curiously refers to us as, is not without validity. It was very

interesting from a sociological point of view, and I see why you wanted me to read it before our project.

ARDIE: Tarzan had to swing from more than one vine to reach Jane.

JEANNE: Well, that's a rather overly simplistic analogy.

ARDIE *(with a slight shrug):* I prefer to simplify things whenever possible, as a beginner would: to better comprehend the issue at hand. Nourishing a beginner's mind can be quite healthy, as it does what what Ullman called "a childlike appetite for what's next".

JEANNE: Actually, what I wanted to tell you was that I drew my own analogy from Prometheus's story. I kept thinking what a nightmarish scenario it would be to have one's own insides ripped out and experience the feeling of dying in agony, to then only have the body regenerate itself, so as to have to endure the same horror again and again. I was struck by the notion that if I had to live the same life over and over again, I'd want it to be more than just interesting.

ARDIE *(smiling):* That's not a bad life application, although it sounds more like a good premise for a horror movie.

JEANNE *(smiling back):* Now you're speaking my language.

ARDIE: I told you that you were the right person for the job.

He gently places a hand on Jeanne's shoulder upon grabbing hold of the door to open it for her.

ARDIE: After you.

Jeanne suddenly halts, and gestures for him to precede her.

JEANNE: No, please. After you.

ARDIE: Very well. If you insist.

As more attendees follow them in, the concierge arrives with a door stop. He excuses himself for his delay and places the wedge firmly beneath the door's frame.

Dedicated to:

LUIS BUÑUEL

JOHN ZORN

+

ALEJANDRO JODOROWSKY

Hats Off to:

ART YOUNG

Thanks for the Inspiration:

KENNETH ANGER · RALPH BAKSHI · BEASTIE BOYS · JEAN-PAUL BELMONDO
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EDDIE SANTIAGO · ROMY SCHNEIDER · SECRET CHIEFS 3 · PAUL SIMON
ANDREA SPINKS · MILENA VUKOTIC



ENDNOTES:

¹ Follow the forthcoming adventures of Titty Garfield and Freddy Burtis in *The Superkiller*. For more information, visit www.mykindofstory.wordpress.com.

² Bobby Gates is a leading character in a short story I wrote in 2007 titled *Pick Up the Gun, My Son*, which pays homage to the Westerns of the 1940s and 50s. The character was inspired by and dedicated to actor Bobby Driscoll. It's available to read and/or download at the aforementioned blog.

³ Special thanks to Mike Patton and Dan the Automator for dishing *Let's Go* as Crudo.

PHOTO REFERENCE:

The photograph on page 53 was obtained from the VHS release of *Bruce Lee Superdragon*, copyright © 1976 Allied Artists Video Corp. For more about this out-of-print title, go to: <http://mykindofstory.wordpress.com/2011/04/30/dick-randall-bruce-li-jimmy-wang-yu-and-who/>