

KHOATICA

by

David Sloma

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FADE IN:

EXT. KHAOS PUBLISHERS - NIGHT

A small run-down office, standing alone. It's pink neon sign flickers, making a hum in the quiet night. SIRENS in the distance. Down the block, the STARDUST CASINO draws a lineup.

BURROUGHS, a thin, almost gaunt man dressed in a tan trench coat, Fedora, and briefcase stands outside looking at the sign. He enters.

INT. KHAOS PUBLISHERS - NIGHT

Burroughs enters the office.

BURROUGHS

Hello? Mr. Vinscence? It's me,
Burroughs.

Burroughs bumps into a big voodoo doll and some other magic items in a bid display by the door and makes some NOISE.

BURROUGHS

(to himself)

Shit!

DON VINCENCE (O.S.)

Who's there?

BURROUGHS

Mr. Vinscence is that you? It's
me, Burroughs. The writer?

DON VINCENCE (O.S.)

Over here.

Burroughs moves deeper into the dark office.

Across the room in the shadows, a man with leather shoes up on a desk - DON VINCENCE(50's), well dressed. His face is in darkness. His rings sparkle as he drums his fingers. He reads a manuscript.

DON VINCENCE

(not looking up)

Have a seat.

BURROUGHS

(nervous)

Oh, didn't see you over there.

Burroughs steps in front of the desk.

DON VINCENCE

(angry)

I sad sit!

BURROUGHS

(nervous)

Ok. I'm sitting.

Don Vinscence throws the manuscript at Burroughs.

DON VINCENCE

What's the FUCK is this?!

BURROUGHS

It's what you asked for - your
life story.

DON VINCENCE

This is NOT what I asked for!

BURROUGHS

You hired me to write a book about
you. Your life-story. That's what
this is. Your story. All of it.

DON VINCENCE

If I wanted lies about myself, I'd
just read the newspaper.

Don pulls out a gun and it glints in the light.

BURROUGHS

(gulps)

Look, I don't want any trouble...

DON VINCENCE

Are you going to fix it, or do I
have to fix you?

He COCKS the gun.

BURROUGHS

I'm not going to lie!...you have
done some, uh...questionable
things in your life. It's all
public record. It's my reputation
on the line. I'm a writer, and
that's all I have. I have to tell
the truth, here.

DON VINCENCE

"Questionable things?" What things?

BURROUGHS

(scared)

W-well, there was that murder
charge a few years back. The case
never made it to trial. The judges
kept...kept...

DON VINSCENCE
(raises the gun)
Kept, what?

BURROUGHS
...dying...

Don leaps up and SHOOTs Burroughs. Don's face breaks into the light.

DON VINSCENCE
(yelling)
I ain't no murderer. Everyone I
ever killed had it coming!

Burroughs is down in a pool of blood. Don kicks the body, then picks up the phone.

DON VINSCENCE
(into phone)
Get in here. I got a mess for you
to clean up.

Don grabs the manuscript, sits back and turns the pages.

A midget enters wearing a tuxedo, carrying a mop. He locks the door, pulls the shades, and begins to mop up the blood.

Burroughs' ghost RISES from his dead body, and floats in the air. Burroughs looks at his body, SCREAMING, and is PULLED outside by a force. He hovers over the office.

He tries to fly back into the office, but cannot- there's a force-field around the building. Several other ghosts of judges, and scruffy looking characters sit on the roof.

ROBBER GHOST PAUL (30's), a robber ghost in black clothes and hat floats over to Burroughs.

ROBBER GHOST PAUL
It's no good. He's got some voodoo
going on. Can't get in there.

BURROUGHS
What's going on? Am I...dead?

ROBBER GHOST PAUL
Yep. It ain't so bad, really. I've
been dead for a long time now. I
was one of Don's first victims. My
name's Paul.

Paul extends his ghostly hand. Burroughs tries to shake it, and his hand passes right through.

BURROUGHS
I must still be in shock.

ROBBER GHOST PAUL
You'll get used to it.

Don goes to the window, watching them.

DON VINSCENCE
(laughing)
Suckers!

BURROUGHS
You'll pay for this Vinscence!

Roll Titles.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. JONES'S APARTMENT - DAY

JONES MODELL, twenties, thin, stylish, sits at his desk in this small, rundown, but clean apartment. He puts a manuscript into an envelope. A TV DRONES on.

He goes to the closet and picks out a leather jacket. Posters on the walls; The Crow, Blade Runner, The Cure.

The phone RINGS, but the answering machine picks up.

JONES (O.S.)
(on machine)
Hi, this is Jones Modell, I'm busy writing a best-seller right now, so please leave your offer of publication after the beep.

He stands stock still, looking at the machine.

MOTHER MODELL (O.S.)
Jones? This is mom. Why don't you come for dinner soon? We can discuss what you are going to do with your life after you forget about that writing fantasy of yours. You should get a real job. Your father, god rest his soul, only wanted you to be happy. Give me a call.

The flicker of the TV screen plays off his face.

JONES
I wish it were that easy, mother.

IN THE HALLWAY

Jones closes his door, and looks both ways. He dashes for the elevator. MRS. PHELPS, an knarly old woman waddles at

him from the far end of the hall.

MRS. PHELPS

Jones, I want the rent. Do you
hear me?

JONES

Yes...

He abandons the elevator, and scrambles down the stairs.

EXT. KHAOS PUBLISHERS - CONTINUOUS

Burroughs the ghost, sits on the roof of the office along
with the other ghosts.

BURROUGHS

So what do we do now?

ROBBER GHOST PAUL

Wait for the right opportunity.
Then we can make Vinscence pay.

Down below, Jones approaches the office and goes in. The
ghost watch him enter.

INT. KHAOS PUBLISHERS - CONTINUOUS

Jones walks up to the receptionist's desk. She barely stops
chewing her gum, and doesn't look up.

CATHY

Yeah?

JONES

(checks card)

I've got an appointment with
Don Vinscence?

CATHY

He's not in, but have a seat. He
shouldbe in soon. Help yourself to
coffee.

JONES

Thank you.

Jones sits and pours himself a cup of coffee. He looks down
at a stack of magazines.

INSERT: "Writer's World", a cover story on Madame De Manual
and her best selling book "Oui, Oui".

The SOUND of shouting from another room. A door SLAMS. A
man exits. Jones approaches the receptionist.

JONES

Can I just leave this for him?

CATHY

Sure, what is it?

JONES

Mr. Vinscnece was looking for a new writer. It's a manuscript of mine. For a novel.

CATHY

I'll make sure he gets it.

JONES

Thank you.

Jones hands his manuscript over.

Burroughs peers in through the window.

Burroughs's POV as Jones hands over his script.

BACK TO SCENE

EXT. KHAOS PUBLISHERS - CONTINUOUS

Burroughs floats near the window, electric sparks coming off force field where Burroughs contacts it. He is repelled away.

BURROUGHS

No, don't give them that manuscript. You'll be sorry.

Burroughs is pushed back up to the roof.

Jones exits the office.

Paul, along with some of the other ghosts come to the edge of the roof.

BURROUGHS

I feel for the guy. I was a writer too. Look where it got me.

ROBBER GHOST PAUL

Death plays no favorites.

BURROUGHS

I hope he doesn't get the same like I got.

ROBBER GHOST PAUL

Yeah, that would suck. At least I kinda deserved what I got. But no one deserves to be left in limbo like this.

BURROUGHS

I wish there was something I could do. Some way to warn him.

ROBBER GHOST PAUL

I think there is.

Paul flies off the roof and hovers over the street.

BURROUGHS

(surprised)

How did you? You mean we can...I can do that?

ROBBER GHOST PAUL

Sure, just try.

Burroughs steps off the roof, sinks fast, going right into the ground.

Burroughs' POV of the ground rushing up at him.

BACK TO SCENE

BURROUGHS

(screaming)

Agghhhhh!

Paul flies to his side, and pulls him out of the ground.

ROBBER GHOST PAUL

Relax. You can't get hurt. You're already dead.

BURROUGHS

That's what I was afraid of.

ROBBER GHOST PAUL

Come on. It's easy. Just think yourself in a new location, and you'll fly there instantly.

Burroughs rises out of the ground and floats.

BURROUGHS

Yeah? Ok. How about on that rooftop over there.

ROBBER GHOST PAUL

Go for it.

Burroughs looks to a distant rooftop, and WHOOSH! He flies over to it in blinding speed and appears in a puff of white smoke.

BURROUGHS

Wow!

Paul appears behind him in another puff of smoke.

ROBBER GHOST PAUL

Yeah, it's pretty cool.

Burroughs holds his hand up and looks through the transparency of his form.

BURROUGHS

Can the living see us?

ROBBER GHOST PAUL

Only if we want them too. I guess we have special powers that way.

BURROUGHS

And we can talk to the living too?

ROBBER GHOST PAUL

That's assuming they don't think they are going crazy when they see a ghost in front of them.

Paul turns in circles.

BURROUGHS

So why can't we get at Vinscence?

ROBBER GHOST PAUL

He's got some voodoo priestess that comes in and puts those damn charms everywhere. Can get near the bastard.

BURROUGHS

I gotta warn that other writer before he gets killed too.

ROBBER GHOST PAUL

Don't bother. No one ever believes us.

INT. BAR - EVENING

Jones sits at the bar with some old drunks.

FRANK MILLS (ON TV)

...And now, with the latest arts news, I'm Frank Mills. Tree Books is announcing the publication of Madame De Manuel's newest book "Oui, Oui!". I've got a copy right here. She is an accomplished French writer, this

is her first book in English.
She's currently on an
international tour which touches
down tonight at Jack's Place,
where she will be reading an
excerpt, and signing autographs
for all you lucky fans...

Jones turns to the TV.

JONES

I'd like to get one book published
in English myself.

DRUNK AT BAR

I wrote a book once...can't
remember the name...

The drunk slugs back his beer.

FRANK MILLS (ON TV)

...In other news tonight, Don
Vinscence, the owner of the
Stardust Casino has come under
fire lately for suspected mob
ties...

In the corner - the midget is watching Jones.

FREDDIE (20's), dark, workman's' dress, coveralls and boots,
slaps Jones on the back.

FREDDIE

Jonsey! How the hell are ya?

JONES

Hey, Freddie.

FREDDIE

Imagine seeing you here at my
favorite watering hole.

JONES

Gotta drown my sorrows somewhere.

FREDDIE

You got that right.

The bartender, SAM (50's), heavy-set puts down a beer for
Freddie.

SAM THE BARTENDER

Usual, Freddie.

FREDDIE

Ah, thanks Sam.

SAM THE BARTENDER

Yep.

Sam goes back to his tasks.

FREDDIE

(to Jones)

Hey, still trying to sell that book of yours?

JONES

Yep. Not having much luck.

(sighs)

Any new tales from the hole?

FREDDIE

It amazes me how anyone can find subway tunnel maintenance so interesting, Jones.

JONES

Call it a morbid curiosity.

FREDDIE

It can get morbid, alright, sure.

JONES

Oh, do tell.

FREDDIE

Well, yesterday there was this lawyer that decided to take a header off the platform and onto the main track. Awful mess. We found one of his eyeballs stuck to the ceiling.

Jones chokes on his beer.

JONES

Hey Freddie, want to go to a author's reading?

FREDDIE

No, I think I'd rather gnaw my own arm off. I gotta work tonight, anyhow.

JONES

Alright, I gotta go home and get ready. I'll see you later, Freddie.

FREDDIE

Right, take care, Jonsey.

DRUNK AT BAR

Ready, Freddie. Care, Jonsey.

INT. JONES'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

Jones checks his look in the mirror. He's got a change of clothes, a nice shirt and jacket. With a final ruffle of his hair, he's ready.

JONES

Luck be a lady tonight!

INT. SUBWAY - CONTINUOUS

Jones moves down into the tunnels. A SAXOPHONE grows louder. A SAXOPHONE PLAYER stands on the platform, hat on the ground full of change. Jones walks past, tossing in a coin.

The SOUND OF A POWERFUL VACUUM as Freddie is working on the tracks.

JONES

(yells)

Freddie!

FREDDIE

Heya Jones!

A loud horn blows.

FREDDIE

Uh-oh.

Freddie comes up on the platform. The subway car approaches.

JONES

(shouting)

I gotta go, Freddie. I'll see you later.

FREDDIE

(yells)

Okie.

INT. SUBWAY CAR - CONTINUOUS

Jones looks out the window. He reads a book. The trains slows and the doors open. Jones realizes his stop is up, and leaves.

EXT. JACK'S BAR - CONTINUOUS

Jones stops outside a bar. A sandwich board is out on the sidewalk, announcing a "Reading by Madame de Manuel. Tonite!!" Jones enters.

INT. JACK'S BAR - CONTINUOUS

Inside, a Parisian woman, MADAME DE MANUEL, reads from her

book. Apart from the bartender, and a large bouncer, Jones is the only one in the place. He finds a seat.

MADAME DE MANUEL
(with a thick French
accent)

...as my love washes over your
continent, my foreign-minister
makes a plea, to stop the
embargoes on my heart, and raise
the central interest rate...

JONES
(to himself)
This really sucks.

Jones takes out a pad of paper, and starts writing.

Burroughs appears in the seat near Jones.

BURROUGHS
I see you have taken to
appropriation, young man.

Jones looks up and sees Burroughs. He tips his hat at Jones, then disappears! Jones blinks, rubbing his eyes.

JONES
(loudly)
Oh, my god! What the hell was that?

Madame De Manuel sees Jones's reaction, and smiles. She's reading intently, sweaty, touching her neck.

MADAME DE MANUEL
...you climb my alpine summits,
upon my snow-crested peaks, you
plant you flag of exploration, and
I am yours to conquer again, and
again!

She ends, breathless. To the bouncer's APPLAUSE she steps down from the podium, and signs a few autographs for the fans that have entered. Madame De Manuel makes her way backstage, but stops to sit with Jones.

MADAME DE MANUEL
(all smiles)
Hello there. You seem very taken
with my writing. I am flattered.

She extends her hand.

JONES
(being nice)
Pleased to meet you. Your work is
very...engaging.

MADAME DE MANUEL

You seemed to really like it? You were getting into it? Not many men do. What is your name?

JONES

(looks at the fans)

Jones. And, actually it was very good. Yes. I liked it a lot. But, it's getting late...I really must be going.

Jones gets up to leave.

MADAME DE MANUEL

Goodbye, mon amour. Until we meet again.

JONES

Yes, the pleasure was mine.

He makes hasty retreat. She smiles, and looks after him longingly.

MADAME DE MANUEL

Au revoir.

EXT. JACK'S BAR - CONTINUOUS

Jones bolts from the bar and down the street. A bright orange taxi rolls along. It has a unique paintjob; red rose with flowing stem that begins on the hood and continues past the doors to the trunk.

INSIDE the TAXI

ESMERLIDA SANCHEZ, a sexy, young Latino woman, (20's), drives the cab. Her long hair flows in the breeze. She sings to a Latin song on the radio.

ESMERELDA

(singing in Spanish,
subtitled)

...I will love you forever...

ON THE STREET

Jones walks.

IN THE TAXI

Esmerlida squinting for a better look at Jones's rear as it wiggles.

ESMERELDA
(smiles to herself)
Mmm..very nice one, Mister.

EXT. ALLEY - CONTINUOUS

Jones turns down a deserted alley. Cats SCREECH in the night. A drunk begs for change. Jones walks on. Esmerelda's stops.

ESMERELDA
(shouts after him)
Ride, mister?

Jones walks deeper into the alley, unaware.

ESMERELDA
Oh!

ON JONES

A white cloud appears, and spins around above Jones. It follows him down the alley.

Esmerelda watches the cloud, terrified. She makes the sign of the cross. Jones doesn't notice, and walks around a corner. Burroughs appears from the cloud and follows.

The midget scurries down the alley.

AT THE TAXI

Esmerelda gets out and approaches the alley. Burroughs walks towards her, tilted down to cover his face. As they pass he looks into her eyes.

BURROUGHS
Evening, Ma'am.

ESMERELDA
(scared)
Ahhh!

He walks off into the shadows. Esmerelda jumps into her taxi and tears off.

ESMERELDA
Ay, caramba! What a night.

INT. JONES'S APARTMENT - CONTINUOUS

Jones fumbles with the door, and enters the apartment. He reaches into the fridge, pulls out a bottle of wine, opens the screw cap and takes a chug. He makes his way to the bed and FLOPS down.

JONES

What a night.

He drinks and soon the empty bottle hits the floor.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. JONES'S APARTMENT - MORNING

A BANGING on the door wakes Jones. He sits up in bed, rubs his head.

JONES

Yeah? Who is it?

MRS. PHELPS (V.O.)

It's Mrs. Phelps. Open up.

JONES

(under his breath)

Oh, gawd...

He get up, and stubs his toe on the empty bottle on the floor.

JONES

Ah, christ!

He opens to the door to see Mrs. Phelps waving a bunch of envelopes in his face.

MRS. PHELPS

Young man, you have bills to pay.

JONES

(taking the envelopes)

Yes, I do. I've been falling a little behind lately...

MRS. PHELPS

Your rent is three months overdue. I can't abide this much longer.

JONES

I realize that, and I will...

MRS. PHELPS

If I don't get your back rent, plus the rent for next month by the first - then you had better look for someplace else to loaf around in. I'll kick you out.

She turns and SLAMS the door.

JONES

Ow.

Jones puts his hands to his head.

IN THE KITCHEN

He lets several envelopes fall to the trash, but one catches his attention. He opens it.

JONES

(reading)

"Dear Mr. Modell, after looking over your manuscript, I regret to inform you that we have decided to pass on it's publication. Thank you very much for your interest. Sincerely, Jake Johnson, Johnson Publishing." Another rejection. Big surprise.

He tosses the letter aside.

IN THE BATHROOM

Jones turns on the tape player, then steps into the shower.

IN THE KITCHEN

Jones walks in wearing a bathrobe. He lights up a smoke, and munches some toast, looking at the newspaper. INSERT: "MADAME DE MANUEL'S A BEST-SELLER".

JONES

Son of a bitch. I write better than her any day.

He tosses the paper away, disgusted. The paper lands, the headline: "CASINO OWNER ENTERS MAYORAL RACE".

INT. BANQUET HALL - EVENING

Don Vinscense sits with a few important-looking people at this society function.

PRESENTER

(at podium)

Hello, and thank you all for coming to the monthly meeting of the chamber of commerce. Today we have a distinguished guest with us. He's a renowned local figure, head of the Stardust casino, and now mayoral candidate. Please welcome, Donald Vinscense!

Applause, and Don takes the stage.

DON VINSCENCE

Thank you, just call me Don,
heheh! I am honored to be your
guest her tonight, and I just want
to say that a vote for me a mayor
is a vote or the future of this
city. Because, with a guy like me
at the helm, all my decisions are
sure to be 'wise'! Get it?

Polite applause. People talk among themselves, laughing and
whispering.

DON VINSCENCE

(seriously)

I said, do you GET IT?

The applause louder now as they see he's serious.

EXT. JONES'S APARTMENT - CONTINUOUS

Jones exits to the street. He walks.

EXT. BANK - CONTINUOUS

Jones enters some numbers into the ATM machine. It beeps and
spits out a piece of paper. Jones pulls the receipt out and
studies it.

JONES

Ohhh no!

Jones sits down on the curb, people stare.

JONES

Son of a bitch. I'm flat busted.

Looking across the street, he sees Burroughs.

JONES

It couldn't be...

Jones crosses the street and enters a cafe.

INT. CAFE - CONTINUOUS

Jones enters and looks around.

JONES

(shakes head)

No ghosts. Good. It must be the
stress.

Jones finds a seat and unpacks his books.

INT. DON'S OFFICE - CONTINUOUS

ZELDA, a colorfully attired voodoo priestess adjusts the charms and altar in the corner. Then she goes around the room, scattering powder everywhere, ringing bells, and muttering. Don enters.

DON VINSCENCE

What's she doing here?

CATHY

She said it was time for the monthly recharge of the voodoo.

DON VINSCENCE

I see.

Zelda pauses and confronts Don.

ZELDA

(concerned)

You have very strong spirits at work here. I don't know how much longer I can keep them away.

DON VINSCENCE

Why's that?

ZELDA

They are growing in number. And hatred. They want to get you, Don Vinscence!

DON VINSCENCE

Just do what you can. I don't want any more hauntings around here.

ZELDA

I'll try, but these ghosts are very powerful.

DON VINSCENCE

I don't want any relapses. Watch this.

Don turns on a video monitor that replays a tape of ghosts buzzing around Don and his men.

ZELDA

My voodoo always works. If it doesn't, bring it back for a refund.

DON VINSCENCE

How much.

ZELDA

\$500 dollars, please.

DON VINSCENCE

Ouch.

ZELDA

A problem?

DON VINSCENCE

No, but it's expensive.

ZELDA

Ok. Because I like you, \$450.

DON VINSCENCE

Cathy will pay you.

ZELDA

The forces are getting stronger.
Have you killed anyone lately?

DON VINSCENCE

Just do your job.

She goes off into a corner, chanting, waving juju charms.

ZELDA

Ohhh, spirits begone...

INT. CAFE - CONTINUOUS

Jones is writing.

JONES (V.O.)

(reading)

"The one armed man clawed his way to the top of the stairs. And there she was - towering above him, his nemesis; the four armed woman, like him, a victim of cruel genetic experiments. In his exhaustion, the one armed man never noticed the pain from the bullet holes which had cut through his flesh. She reached down, her full breasts threatening to burst from their confinement. She pulled him up by his one arm, and embraced him. Death always turned her on".

He stops.

JONES

No! No! I really suck! What am I gonna do?

He slumps in his seat. Just then, Madame De Manuel passes by.

She waves, noticing Jones. She enters.

MADAME DE MANUEL

Hello, mon ami. This is so nice to meet you again like this, Jones.

JONES

(smiles through his teeth)

Hello. How are you?

He slams his notebook closed.

MADAME DE MANUEL

May I take a seat with you?

JONES

Sure, go right ahead.

She's already in her seat.

MADAME DE MANUEL

So, you liked my reading, eh? You are one of the few men who ever like my books. I don't know why, because they are so romantic.

JONES

(faking it)

Well, I know quality when I see it. Your book is doing very well.

MADAME DE MANUEL

Yes. Isn't it fantastic. My first time writing in English, and poof - a best-seller.

She squeals and clutches Jones by the arm.

JONES

Yeah, well, I've been writing in English all my life, and no one had published my books yet. I don't know if it will ever happen.

MADAME DE MANUEL

Oh, not to worry. I am sure someone will recognize your talent.

JONES

Yes, hopefully before I'm dead. Maybe I'll just end it all. Then they'll publish me.

JONES

No, you mustn't do that. I cannot lose such a great fan.

A WAITER approaches.

SAM THE WAITER

Hello. I am Sam, your waiter for today. The chef's special is gumbo - but I wouldn't touch it. What would you two lovebirds like?

Madame smiles and snuggles close to Jones.

JONES

(flatly)

Coffee. Black.

SAM THE WAITER

(jots it down)

Mmm-hmmm. And for the lady?

MADAME DE MANUEL

Cafe au lait for me.

SAM THE WAITER

Yes. Be right back.

Sam turns and exits.

MADAME DE MANUEL

So, Jones, what writers inspire you?

JONES

Hemingway, Bradbury... There are so many...

MADAME DE MANUEL

Oh, yes, very good writers those.

Jones looks over to another table, and sees Burroughs has appeared again. He does a double-take.

JONES

Y-yes..they are very good writers, you don't say.

MADAME DE MANUEL

And I am sure you will do well for yourself too, one day. The important thing is to keep writing. Don't ever stop.

AT THE OTHER TABLE

Burroughs raises a cup to Jones. Jones blinks his eyes.

JONES

Listen, I'm not feeling very well

right now. Would you excuse me?

MADAME DE MANUEL

Don't be silly. I don't bite,
unless you want me to.

She puts a hand on Jones's leg. He stands quickly.

JONES

Really, I am not well. I need to
get some fresh air.

MADAME DE MANUEL

Why, of course, Jones. You should
get some rest. You look pale as
a ghost.

(beat)

I am staying at the Royal Hotel
for a few days. Telephone me when
you are feeling up to a drink.
Alright?

JONES

(weakly)

Goodbye. See you later.

Jones looks over to the other table, but Burroughs is gone.
Shaking his head, Jones exits.

EXT. STREET - CONTINUOUS

Jones wanders, stunned.

JONES

This must be what's it like to go
crazy. Completely nuts. Maybe
I'm not eating enough greens?

As Jones walks, a beggar grabs at him.

Jones walks quickly down the street, looking around him for
signs of pursuit. Suddenly, Burroughs appears leaning
against a lamppost.

BURROUGHS

Where you going, Jones?

JONES

Aaaggghhhh!!!!

Jones darts out in front of Esmerlida's taxi. The car tries
to stop, but ends up (lightly) knocking him down. Esmerelda
gets out to help him.

ESMERELDA

Oh my god!! Are you okay?? Are
you hurt?? Let me help you!

Jones looks at the abandoned lamp post.

JONES

I'm okay! Really. Okay.

ESMERELDA

You're not hurt?

JONES

You didn't hit me that hard.

ESMERELDA

Why did you run out like that?
You weren't looking.

JONES

S-someone was after me.

ESMERELDA

Really? Get in. I'll drive you
home. Anywhere you want to go.

She helps him into the car.

INT. CAB - CONTINUOUS

They drive off.

ESMERELDA

Listen, I'm really sorry.

JONES

Don't worry - it's ok. You can
take me to Main and Fourth.

ESMERELDA

Ok.

Esmerelda looks at Jones in the rear-view. She moistens her
lips.

ESMERELDA

Say, what's your name?

Jones looks up to the mirror, and briefly meets her eyes. He
looks down, sees her name and photo on the back of the seat
in front of him: Esmerelda Sanchez. INSERT: photo and name.

JONES

Well, Esmerelda, I'm Jones.

ESMERELDA

I'm Esmer...Ohhh. Very pleased to
meet you, Jones.

JONES

You have a beautiful name. Where are you from?

ESMERELDA

From Venezuela. I came here to find a better life - and well, I'm still looking. But, no, things are a little better.

Jones nods and checks out the decor of the cab; stuffed parrot, snow-filled globes, Jesus and Elvis statuettes.

JONES

Nice cab you got here.

ESMERELDA

(suspicious)

Thanks. What kind of trouble are you in? I like to know what kind of people I'm driving around.

JONES

I didn't do anything, but somebody is following me.

ESMERELDA

(insisting)

What did you do?

JONES

That's just it - nothing!!

ESMERELDA

Oh, come on! People don't follow you for nothing.

JONES

Around here they do!

ESMERELDA

Who's following you?

JONES

That woman Madame De Manuel, and a...a....ghost.

(laughs)

No, I'm just seeing things- I'm getting too stressed out.

ESMERELDA

What?!? That woman, I can understand - I've seen her on TV. She's crazy, and you are a very good looking man. But, a ghost!?!

JONES

I don't believe it myself.

ESMERELDA

No wonder.

JONES

Here's my street.

She pulls to a stop. Jones gets out.

JONES

Well, thanks for the ride.

ESMERELDA

Jones, I hope you are okay?

JONES

Sure, never better. Thanks.

He rubs an aching arm.

ESMERELDA

You are very welcome. So, Mr. Jones, you never told me what it is you do?

JONES

I'm a writer - well trying to be.

ESMERELDA

Well, happy writing.

JONES

Thank you. Keep trying, I am sure you can find the life you want.

ESMERELDA

You really think so?

JONES

(shrugs)

Sometimes your wishes come true.

ESMERELDA

Yes, I suppose they do.

JONES

Bye.

ESMERELDA

Bye, Jones.

They wave goodbye. Esmerelda sits in her cab and watches him walk away. She drives off smiling.

ESMERELDA

Ay, caramba!

INT. JONES'S APARTMENT - A FEW HOURS LATER

Jones sits at his computer, writing. Balls of crumpled up paper lie on the floor, along with dirty dishes and empty drink bottles. His music BLARES loudly.

OUTSIDE HIS DOOR

Mrs. Phelps POUNDS away.

MRS. PHELPS

Jones! It's too loud. Turn it down. Do you hear me? Jones. Damn.

She rummages through a big ring of keys.

MRS. PHELPS

Come, on. Which one is it?

She tries several, but with no success.

MRS. PHELPS

(checks her watch)

Aw, hell. It's time for Dynasty.

She marches back to her apartment.

BACK INSIDE

Jones in the bathroom, sticking out his tongue.

Jones lies in bed, staring at the ceiling.

Jones takes his temperature.

He lies in bed with a cloth on his face.

The phone RINGS and the answering machine message comes on.

MOTHER MODELL (V.O.)

Jones, this is mom. Give me a call.

Jones tears the cloth off his face.

IN THE BATHROOM

He takes some vitamins.

IN THE LIVING ROOM

He sits at his computer, writing.

EXT. LAKESHORE - EVENING

Jones walks by the water.

Jones sits looking out over the water. The lights and the moon reflect in the waves.

JONES

I can't take much more of this
shit. Something's gotta change.

(yells)

Please god!

EXT. STARDUST CASINO - CONTINUOUS

A run-down building. It's bright lights a sharp contrast to the darkness around here. A tough looking thug in a tuxedo stands guard outside the entrance, working the velvet ropes. Strange looking straw voodoo dolls sit on either side of the entrance.

A limo pulls up, and the thug opens the door. Out steps Don. He is gone, into the casino. Jones walks past.

INT. CASINO - CONTINUOUS

The place is smoky, loud, and packed. Wall-to-wall losers and the occasional winner. A man puts his dollar in a slot machine, he looks like he hasn't left here in days.

GAMBLER

(stroking the machine)

Come on baby, this is all I got
left. You gotta pay off for me.
You just gotta.

He reverently puts the coin in, and pulls the handle. The tumblers line up: cherry, cherry, dollar-sign.

He sinks to his knees.

GAMBLER

Nooooo...oh, nooooo. I'm
finished. It's all over.

He crawls away from the machine. People stare at him. A young couple rush up to the machine, put in a coin, then pull the handle.

BEHIND THEM

Don Vinscence waves a bouncer over. It's TINY, very tall, bald, very big, wearing a tuxedo.

DON VINSCEANCE

Get him out of here, Tiny.

TINY

Right away, boss.

Tiny picks up the crawling, crying man and carries him off.

DON VINSCENCE

(turning to the crowd)

It's ok folks, it's all being
taken care of. Please go back to
your games.

AT THE SLOT MACHINE

The young couple watches as the tumblers line up: X, X, X.
They win. A siren goes off on the top of the machine, and
coins start gushing out. Don Vinscence straightens his tie,
and moves to the couple.

DON VINSCENCE

Well, congratulations, young
folks. Looks like you hit a big
one. Enjoy.

Ever the charming manager, he shakes their hands, and moves
off. A waitress brings plastic buckets to contain the coins.

EXT. CASINO - CONTINUOUS

Jones is at the door of the casino.

BOUNCER

Hello, sir.

He starts to open the ropes.

JONES

Oh, I'm just looking, thanks.

BOUNCER

Yes, sir.

JONES

(pointing at the
dolls)

Say, what are these?

BOUNCER

I dunno, some kind of good luck
charm or something. I think the
owner has some sort of voodoo
thing going on, but you didn't
hear it from me.

JONES

Right, ok. Thanks.

INT. CASINO OFFICE - CONTINUOUS

Piles of money litter the tables, and video monitors line one

wall. "Don for Mayor" posters on the wall. Some sort of altar in one corner, with candles, pictures, and artifacts. Don enters. He picks up the phone.

DON VINCENCE

(yelling)

I thought I told Tiny to fix that machine. That's the second big payout this week. Where is he? Get him in here. I'm not under enough stress?

He slams the phone down.

DON VINCENCE

Fuck!

INT. KHAOS PUBLISHERS - CONTINUOUS

Cathy picks up Jones' manuscript and approaches a steel door. She knocks, and a camera above turns in her direction. The door unlocks and swings open. She enters.

INT. HIDDEN HALLWAY - CONTINUOUS

Cathy walks down the gloomy hallway, until she gets to a door at the end. A small, stocky man with bushy black eyebrows greets her - JOEY (40's).

Cathy enters. Joey looks out, searching the hallway behind her.

JOEY

Evening Cathy.

CATHY

How are you doing, Joey?

JOEY

Not too bad. What's up.

CATHY

I have a job for you. We've been checking this guy out- he's just some kid. But, we may be able to use him. Dig up some dirt on him. Something we can use.

She hand Jones's manuscript over. He takes it and eyes it suspiciously, eyebrows wiggling.

JOEY

Jones Modell?

CATHY

That's him. I need you to get a bit of leverage for me. Something

we can hold over him in case we
want to use him.

JOEY

Right.

He hands back the manuscript, and Cathy enters the casino
office from a hidden door.

INT. CASINO OFFICE - CONTINUOUS

Don watches her walk in.

CATHY

Hello Don.

DON VINCENCE

Doesn't anyone knock anymore?

CATHY

Sorry. I'm having Joey check this
guy out. Says he wants to write a
book for you.

She drops the manuscript on the desk.

DON VINCENCE

(picks up manuscript)

Is that so?

Tiny enters.

TINY

Yeah, boss? You wanted to see me?

DON VINCENCE

Come over here, Tiny.

Tiny lumbers over to Don's desk. He smacks Tiny on the head.

TINY

Ow. What was that for?

DON VINCENCE

For being such a schmuck. Now go
fix that machine right!

Tiny exits, rubbing his head. A beautiful young woman enters,
dressed in an elegant evening gown.

Don presents her with a rose.

DON VINCENCE

(sweetly)

For you, my dear. Are we ready?

WOMAN

Yes. So, you really are going to run for mayor?

DON VINCENCE
(proud)
You betcha.

She picks up a sign with his picture on it.

WOMAN
I thought you had to give up running your business?

DON VINCENCE
That's only if I win. And then we'll see about that.

WOMAN
Oh, I hope you win.

DON VINCENCE
Me too.

They exit.

INT. RUNDOWN BAR - CONTINUOUS

The TV plays on, smoke rises from cigarettes. Jones pulls out a pen and his note book. He writes.

JONES (V.O.)
(reading)
"Today was a stinger, alright. I don't know if I will ever get published, or when".

OLD DRUNK
(to Jones)
Whadda you think? Good beer?

JONES
It's alright, yeah.

The drunk and others at the bar launch into belly laughs.

OLD DRUNK
It's recycled!

JONES
Yummy.

Jones looks at the TV.

DON VINCENCE (ON TV)
Everyone says I'm a bad guy. But I'm not. I'm simply a business man - and a very successful one at

that. But, you know, I've other aspirations but business - I'd like to get into the arts, maybe even write a book. I'm a man of many tastes!

REPORTER (ON TV)

Thank you Mr. Vinscence.

DON VINSCECE (ON TV)

Call me Don.

REPORTER

Thank you Don.

DON VINSCECE (ON TV)

Don't mention it.

Don flashes a bright smile.

REPORTER (ON TV)

Back to you, Frank.

FRANK MILLS (ON TV)

Thank you. In an unrelated story, a man lost his dry cleaning business early this morning when it was fire-bombed. The owner denies any mob involvement in the fire-bombing. Moving on to sports...

Jones drinks his beer.

OLD DRUNK

Recycled!

EXT. RUNDOWN BAR - CONTINUOUS

Jones exits and walks. Joey sits in a car with the midget, watching. He pulls out a camera with a long lens, and takes several shots. INSERT: Jones in the camera lens.

EXT. STREET - CONTINUOUS

Esmerelda's cab rolls down the street. A woman hails it down - it's Madame De Manuel.

INT. CAB - CONTINUOUS

Madame De Manuel gets in.

MADAME DE MANUEL

Hello. Fairbanks Drive, please.

ESMERELDA

You got it.

Madame De Manuel dials her cell phone. Esmerelda turns up the Spanish dancing music.

MADAME DE MANUEL

(into phone)

Hi. It's me. Yes I did. You should see the new man I've met. He is very cute, and creative. He's a writer. You would like him.

Esmerelda's eyes widen at the mention of a "writer".

MADAME DE MANUEL

(into phone)

Oh, yes. He reminds me of a fabulous lover I had in Paris. I was just about devoured by this man. Anyway, I shall be staying on a little bit more here. I will return for the signing next week. Yes, I understand.

Esmerelda listens, but doesn't pay much attention to the road.

MADAME DE MANUEL

Stop!! Look out!!

Esmerelda manages to bring the car to a SQUEALING stop just before she runs over a poodle. Madame De Manuel jumps out as Esmerelda sits, shaking.

Madame De Manuel picks up the terrified poodle.

MADAME DE MANUEL

Oh, my poor chien!!

(to Esmerelda)

You should be more careful. I don't think you are watching your driving, no?

Madame De Manuel throws some bills through the window to Esmerelda, then walks off with the dog.

ESMERELDA

Whatever.

INT. TAXI - CONTINUOUS

Esmerelda drives down the street, and sees Jones walking alone. She stops.

ESMERELDA

Hey writer! Get your head out of your stories!

JONES

Esmerelda? What are you doing here?

ESMERELDA

I drive a cab for a living, you remember.

JONES

I'm a little distracted. Sorry.

ESMERELDA

No problem. Get in. I'll give you a drive.

Jones gets in and they drive off.

INT. CAFE - NIGHT

Jones and Esmerelda sit, talking over coffee.

JONES

Thanks for the ride, the other night.

ESMERELDA

It was only fair, I almost killed you.

JONES

Well, yes. And for the ride tonight. You are very kind. You're sure I'm not keeping you?

ESMERELDA

No, I needed a break, and you look like you could use some company. Having girlfriend problems?

JONES

I wish it was as simple as girlfriend problems. But - no.

ESMERELDA

Come on, tell me.

She lightly takes his hand in hers.

JONES

Well, things are getting worse. Now I'm talking to the ghost. I'm sure I'm being followed, too.

Jones nervously looks around.

ESMERELDA

Listen, you are safe with me. But you will have to stay with me.

Jones cracks a small smile.

ESMERELDA

See! I got you to smile.

JONES

Esmerelda, you are really lovely.

ESMERELDA

I try. Is there something else bothering you?

Jones shifts uncomfortably in his seat.

JONES

I'm trying to find a publisher, but it's hell. I'm flat broke now, and my landlady is threatening to kick me out.

ESMERELDA

Don't you have a job or anything?

JONES

No. My father passed away a few months ago, and left me some money. I decided to spend all my time writing, and finally finish the novel I've been working on for years. I did finish it, but getting it sold is something else entirely.

ESMERELDA

I'm sorry about your father.

She reaches out for his hand.

JONES

Thanks.

ESMERELDA

What about your mother? Is she still alive?

JONES

Yes. But I don't have much contact with her. She's..difficult.

ESMERELDA

You don't get along with her? I know what that can be like.

JONES

She thinks what I'm doing is a waste of time. If I ever told her

that I spent all my inheritance...

ESMERELDA

I think you are very brave for wanting to follow your dreams.

JONES

I was going to say that same thing about you.

ESMERELDA

Why me?

JONES

That's what you're doing isn't it? You left you country, and came here.

ESMERELDA

Yes.

JONES

That's not easy.

ESMERELDA

No. I miss my family very much.

JONES

What made you pick here? Driving a taxi can't be the ultimate goal of a woman such as yourself.

She pulls a brochure out of her wallet.

ESMERELDA

You see this? This is the best driving school in the country. You might laugh, but my dream is to be a racecar driver.

JONES

(joking)

Maybe that's why you drive so fast?

ESMERELDA

Come on! It can't be that bad.

JONES

No, but you'll have to stop running people down, first.

ESMERELDA

Ok, mister, you win. But, I know a psychic who can help you with...

JONES

I don't believe in that stuff.

ESMERELDA

And you've got a ghost following
you around? Ai!

JONES

(shrugs)

We'll see.

ESMERELDA

(checks watch)

Ah, time to get back to work.

They exit the cafe.

Joey is watching them in the background.

INT. ESMERELDA'S TAXI - CONTINUOUS

JONES

That's my street, turn here.

EXT. STREET - CONTINUOUS

Joey's car follows them.

INT. ESMERELDA'S TAXI - CONTINUOUS

JONES

This is it.

The car stops.

ESMERELDA

Ok. That'll be \$8.50, please.

JONES

I thought you said the ride was
free.

ESMERELDA

(laughing)

Yes, it is! I was just teasing you.

(beat)

But, there is one payment I'd like.

He moves closer to her, and they kiss.

EXT. STREET - CONTINUOUS

Joey snaps some pictures of this tender moment.

INT. JONES'S APARTMENT - CONTINUOUS

Jones and Esmerelda tumble into his apartment. They fall into

bed.

EXT. JONES'S APARTMENT - CONTINUOUS

Joey is climbing the fire escape.

INT. JONES'S APARTMENT - CONTINUOUS

Jones and Esmerlida are naked, and making wild love.

INT. JONES'S APARTMENT - CONTINUOUS

Joey reaches the window, looks inside, and gets his camera out. He clicks away at Jones and Esmerelda.

FADE TO:

EXT. JONES'S APARTMENT - MORNING

Jones kisses Esmerelda at the front door.

ESMERELDA

Sorry I have to work.

JONES

It's ok. But you work too much.
I'll see you later.

ESMERELDA

Bye.

She exits and walks to her car. Jones watches her walk off and waves.

Jones turns back into his place.

JONES

(to himself)

Wow, what a girl.

Jones lays back in bed, and closes his eyes.

-START DREAM SEQUENCE-

EXT. PUBLISHER'S OFFICE - DAY

Jones stands outside a publishers, manuscript in hand. He pulls himself together - straightens his tie, chest out, stomach in, and enters.

INT. PUBLISHER'S OFFICE - CONTINUOUS

An office full of publishers - including the ones he has already met. They all shake his hand as he hands out copies of his manuscript.

JONES

Here's my book. What do you think?

PUBLISHER'S

(In unison)

We'll read it! We'll read it!
We'll read it!

JONES

Ok. Call me.

PUBLISHER'S

We'll cal you! We'll call you!
We'll call you!

Jones finishes shaking hands and handing out the manuscript, then closes the door on his way out.

The publishers start to laugh. Jones peeks through the keyhole, and sees them all throw his manuscript out the window.

EXT. ALLEY - CONTINUOUS

The manuscripts all land in a dumpster, filled to overflowing with hundreds of manuscripts.

Jones walks into the alley. A car passes by and splashes him with a puddle. Jones throws down the manuscript, and sits down to cry. He looks up and sees manuscripts flying out the windows into the dumpsters. Looking closer, he sees they are all his.

JONES

Oh, no!

Madame De Manuel comes to comfort him. She pulls out a bottle of wine.

EXT. CHURCH - CONTINUOUS

Jones and Madame De Manuel are getting married. Esmerelda is the bridesmaid, and she throws rice violently at Jones. It catches him in the eye, and he chases Esmerelda around the church. Jones's mother walks up to them.

MOTHER MODELL

I'm so glad you found a nice girl,
Jones. Now, if we can just get you
a good job.

Burroughs appears in front of him.

BURROUGHS

You're doing fine. Don't give up
on what you want. They mean well,
but they just don't understand.

-END DREAM SEQUENCE-

INT. JONES'S APARTMENT - MORNING

Jones sits up in bed in a cold sweat.

JONES

Oh, man!

He lies back in bed.

Burroughs stands on the window ledge, looking in.

INT. CASINO OFFICE - DAY

Don Vinscence sits at the desk. Joey, Cathy, and the midget enter.

CATHY

Morning boss, I've got something for you.

DON VINCENCE

Oh really, what's that?

CATHY

The answer to our PR troubles.

DON VINCENCE

Really?

CATHY

That writer is going to help us.

DON VINCENCE

What makes you so sure? There's not a writer in town who will help me out after he see's my bad press.

CATHY

Oh, he will.

Tony hands over the pictures of Jones and Esmerelda in bed.

CATHY

That's him in the pictures with the girl - Jones Modell.

DON VINCENCE

So? He's banging some broad? So what?

CATHY

Yes, but if he doesn't do what we want, she might suddenly turn up murdered somewhere. And, who was

her lover? And could he have been
jealous? Enough to kill her?

DON VINSCENCE

(laughs hard)

You are something else, let me
tell ya.

CATHY

Shall I contact him? Draw up the
contracts?

DON VINSCENCE

(wiping away tears)

Go ahead. Looks like you've got
all the bases covered.

INT. PUBLISHING OFFICE - DAY

Jones is lead to an office. A sexy older woman, in mini-skirt
and heels sits behind the desk.

SECRETARY

Someone to see you ma'am.

MS. VIXEN

Thank you.

Jones steps inside.

MS. VIXEN

(looks him over)

Hello. I'm Ms. Vixen. What can
I do for you?

JONES

Could you take a look at my book?

The woman studies him for a second.

MS. VIXEN

Why, of course! Let me see it.

Jones hands her the manuscript, then sits. She studies it.

MS. VIXEN

Hmm...Interesting. It reminds me
of a William S. Burroughs book.

JONES

Really? He's one of my favorite
authors. Thank you. So, do you
think my work will fit in here?

MS. VIXEN

Not so hasty, young man. We
specialize in women's erotica, but

you may make a welcome edition to our stable of writers. Tell me, are you married or single, Jones?

JONES

Single.

MS. VIXEN

Very good.

She sits on the edge of the desk, showing some leg.

JONES

It is?

MS. VIXEN

Oh yes. In fact we may be able to work something out.

She reaches for Jones, and pulls him forward by his tie.

JONES

Ok. So, you'll be in touch then?

MS. VIXEN

Mmm...Yes. We can work something out right now.

Jones gets up, pulling his tie back. He exits.

MS. VIXEN

Bye, Jones. Come back anytime.

INT. JONES'S APARTMENT- NIGHT

Jones lets a bunch of "Overdue - Final notice" bills fall into the trash. One letter remains, it's from "KHAOS PUBLISHING". He tears it open.

A KNOCK comes on the door. Mrs. Phelps is banging away on his door. He ignores it.

JONES

(reading)

"Mr. Modell, after reviewing your manuscript for "Times Like These" I found it very impressive. I am offering you a contract of publication. Enclosed please find an advance for six thousand dollars. I hope this meets with your expectations. Please contact me so we can set up a meeting and sign the details of the publication agreement. Sincerely, Cathy Reynolds, Khaos Publishing".

Jones dances around, waving the cheque in the air.

JONES

Yes! Yes! I can't believe it.
This is great. This is so great!

IN THE HALLWAY

Jones creeps up to apartment 101, marked "MANAGER". He
knocks, and runs off.

EXT. BRIDGE - NIGHT

Esmerelda's cab sits under a bridge. She reads the newspaper
INSERT: the story "Madame De Manuel a bestseller".

ESMERELDA

(to stuffed parrot)

I bet our writer Jones could do
better than her, eh Polly? Well,
it wouldn't take much.

She glances up at a postcard of a racecar driver.

ESMERELDA

Someday maybe all our dreams will
come true.

Her cell phone rings.

ESMERELDA

(into phone)

Yes? Hello? Jones? Wait, where
are you? I'll be right there.

EXT. CAB - CONTINUOUS

Esmerelda peels out, tires spitting gravel and smoking.

INT. CAFE - CONTINUOUS

Jones sits, drinking coffee. Esmerelda enters.

ESMERELDA

What's wrong? What happened? The
ghost?

JONES

Hi. No, something much more
dramatic.

He hands her the letter. She scans it, and the check.

ESMERELDA

Jones, this is great!

JONES

(laughs)

Yeah.

Madame De Manual enters.

JONES

Oh, god.

ESMERELDA

Oh god.

She walks up to Jones and Esmerelda.

MADAME DE MANUEL

Hello Jones, what's new?

JONES

Oh, I just sold my novel.

MADAME DE MANUEL

(eyeing Esmerelda)

How nice for you.

ESMERELDA

I have to get back to work now.

JONES

I'll walk you out.

Jones and Esmerelda exit. Madame sits.

SAM THE WAITER

What will you have, Madame?

MADAME DE MANUEL

(stares after Jones)

Not what I wanted.

CUT TO:

INT. KHAOS PUBLISHERS - DAY

Jones enters.

CATHY

Jones, how are you?

JONES

Great, thanks.

CATHY

Have a seat, Jones. Here's the contract. I think you'll find everything in order. The balance of fifty thousand dollars you will receive on actual publication, less the advance. We get ten

percent of the sales, and then we can negotiate for film, TV, and foreign publication rights.

Jones looks over the contract.

JONES

It's all happening so fast, but it sounds fine, I guess.

CATHY

It's all standard. If you feel you need a lawyer, that's fine.

JONES

No, it's alright. Got a pen?

Cathy hands a pen over. Jones signs the contract.

CATHY

Excellent. Now my signature.

Cathy signs.

CATHY

Now, I would like you to meet with the owner tomorrow. Will your schedule allow it? Say 10 am?

JONES

Sure, that's fine.

CATHY

Excellent. I'll see you tomorrow.

Cathy shakes his hand, smiling broadly.

INT. JONES'S APARTMENT - DAY

Jones walks up the stairs and goes to a door marked "LANDLORD". He knocks. The door opens. Mrs. Phelps answers, ice cream dish in hand.

MRS. PHELPS

Jones?

JONES

Hello Mrs. Phelps. I've got something for you

He waves the money in front of her. Her eyes widen.

INT. TAXI - EVENING

Jones and Esmerelda are dressed up, driving along. It starts to rain lightly.

JONES

I really appreciate this,
Esmerelda.

ESMERELDA

Are you kidding? It's an honor to
meet your mother. Having us over
for dinner is so nice of her.

JONES

Not really. She just wants to
interrogate me. She'll have a
million questions.

ESMERELDA

Yes, but now you have some good
news to tell her.

JONES

(points)

Maybe. Here it is.

She pulls over.

INT. MOTHER MODELL'S APARTMENT - CONTINUOUS

MOTHER MODELL opens the door. She is short and thin with a
stern demeanor. The decor utilitarian and dull.

MOTHER

Jones! You look a bit sickly.

She gives Jones a stiff hug.

JONES

Hi, mom.

MOTHER

(sternly)

And who's this you've got with you?

JONES

Mother, this is Esmerelda.

ESMERELDA

Pleased to meet you.

MOTHER

Yes.

INT. MOTHER MODELL'S APARTMENT - A FEW MINUTES LATER

Jones and Esmerelda sit as Mother brings the food out.

ESMERELDA

(whispers to Jones)

Is she always this friendly?

JONES

Just be lucky you caught her on a good day.

Mother enters. She puts the plates down on the table.

MOTHER

Go ahead, serve yourselves.

Jones serves Esmerelda some, and then himself.

MOTHER

So, Esmerelda, what do you do?

ESMERELDA

I drive a taxi, for now, but I have other aspirations

JONES

She wants to be a race driver.

MOTHER

(eyes wide)

Your kidding?

ESMERELDA

No. I really love the sport.

MOTHER

Sounds almost as far-fetched as Jones's idea. He thinks he can make a living off his writing. That'll be the day.

Jones puts down his fork.

JONES

That's what I wanted to talk to you about.

MOTHER

Oh, you've finally come to your senses? You've gotten a job?

JONES

No. I sold my first book.

MOTHER

You what?

JONES

Yes. I have a contract, and my work will be published soon.

MOTHER

I'll believe it when I see it.

This better not be some kind of story just to keep everyone off your back, Jones.

JONES

You'll see the book when it comes out. Will that make you happy?

MOTHER

If I could see your father back with me, and not dead because you broke his heart after him offering to send you to law school, but you had to go your own way - that would make me happy.

(to Esmerlida)

Do you know he worked himself to death to provide for us?

JONES

You thought you'd be happy that I finally got what I wanted. But no. Nothing will please you.

He stands and exits.

JONES

I'm going.

ESMERELDA

I better go after him.

INT. TAXI - A FEW MINUTES LATER

Jones and Esmerelda drive in silence. Jones stares outside at the rain.

ESMERELDA

You're Mother just wants the best for you, Jones.

JONES

She's got a strange way of showing it.

They drive on in silence.

INT. KHAOS PUBLISHERS - MORNING

Jones enters.

JONES

Good morning.

CATHY

Hi Jones. Just hang on a moment.

She picks up the phone.

CATHY
(into phone)
Ok, he's here.

The metal door in the office slides open. Tiny steps out.

TINY
Follow me.

IN THE PASSAGEWAY

Jones looks around, eyes wide.

JONES
What kind of office is this?

TINY
Don't worry about it - I'm taking
you to see the boss.

They reach the other door. Tiny knocks. A camera watches their every move. The door opens to reveal Joey. He waves them in.

INT. DON'S OFFICE - CONTINUOUS

JONES
This sure is some setup you've got
here.

TINY
We like it.

Tiny picks up the phone.

TINY
(into intercom)
Mr. Vinscence to the office,
please.

The sound BOOMS throughout the casino.

TINY
(to Jones)
Have a seat.

Jones stares at the elaborate decor. Don Vinscence glides into the room.

DON VINCENCE
Hi there.

TINY
Here's your guy, boss.

DON VINSCENCE
Thanks, Tiny.

Don offers his hand to Jones.

DON VINSCENCE
Very pleased to meet you, Jones.
I am Donald Vinscence, but just
call me Don for short.

Jones stands, shakes his hand.

JONES
This is an impressive office
you've got here. Secret tunnels,
and all.

DON VINSCENCE
(laughs)
That's not the half of it, Jones.
But please, take a seat, let's
talk business. Would you like a
drink?

JONES
No, really, I'm fine.

DON VINSCENCE
Some water, perhaps?

JONES
Alright.

DON VINSCENCE
Tiny, get our guest some water.

Tiny fetches Jones a drink.

DON VINSCENCE
Now I have some suggestions for
the rewrite.

JONES
Rewrite?

DON VINSCENCE
Yes. Rewrite. Didn't Cathy tell
you?

JONES
But I thought you liked it?

DON VINSCENCE
Your writing, I got something out
of. You understand me? But it
needs work.

JONES

What kind of work?

DON VINCENCE

Well, I have a list here of what
I would like to see happen.

Don hands Jones a thick bunch of papers. He looks it over
quickly. Tiny returns with the water.

JONES

This is impossible! I'm sorry, but
I don't think I can...

DON VINCENCE

It's not so difficult, is it?

JONES

No, but it's not even my story.
It's a completely different book
you want me to write. I don't
think this is for me.

DON VINCENCE

(sternly)

Not so fast. You have already
cashed our check, and signed the
contract. Now you are committed.

Tiny crosses his large arms.

JONES

(swallows)

I am, yes. I'm just nervous.
I just hope I can do it.

DON VINCENCE

Don't be ridiculous. I know you
will do fine. I am a very good
judge of character. And in you
Jones, I see a great amount of
intelligence, and determination.
Am I not right?

JONES

Yes.

(pause)

Do I know you?

DON VINCENCE

I should think so. You haven't
seen me on TV?

JONES

I might have.

DON VINCENCE

(to Tiny)
Tell Cathy to step up our TV
campaign...people still don't
recognize me.

Tiny nods.

DON VINSCENCE
I'll come to the point. I want
you to tell my story. To write my
memoirs. You are someone who
understands the meaning of
struggle. I want a firsthand
account of my life - leaving out
certain, unflattering details, of
course.

JONES
Of course.

DON VINSCENCE
I want you to write a great story
of how I built my business out of
nothing: with these hands and a
few dedicated partners.

He waves his hands to Tiny and Joey.

JONES
But you're in the mafia aren't
you? You're not gonna kill me,
are you?

Don lets out a mighty, hearty, and frightening laugh.

DON VINSCENCE
No. No. You see, that is why I
need you to help people understand
the truth: I never killed
anyone - I just evened the score.
I only created opportunities where
there was none, and success out of
failure. What's the wrong in that?

JONES
Are you sure you've got the right
guy?

DON VINSCENCE
We are very sure, Jones.

Joey gives Jones a huge, smug grin.

JONES
I was paid for my novel, and now
you are telling me that it's going
to be something else. Your

biography?

Don gets up and walks to the window.

DON VINCENCE

You see, Jones, for a man in my position, it's very difficult to get things done through traditional channels. The opinions of many people are clouded where I am concerned. Sometimes I must employ creative means to get the job done. And thus, we have found you.

JONES

But why me?

DON VINCENCE

You are a young man of talent, and unpublished. I can provide you with the opportunity of a lifetime - to have your work published, and all the success that will come with it. And you can provide me the chance to clear my name, so that my family will not have to live in shame for things they had nothing to do with. This book will make me known for something good. And it will improve my PR- I am running for mayor shortly, you know? It will make you famous too.

JONES

Sure, as long as you choose the subject and force me to write about it. I mean, I think you've got the wrong guy. How can I write about you, or the "business" you are in. I don't know the first thing about it.

Don folds his hands.

DON VINCENCE

You have a point there. How can you write about something you don't know anything about? Can't be done. So you will have to be given a crash course in me and my business. I hope you brought your pencil.

INT. CASINO - CONTINUOUS

DON VINCENCE
Jones, this is where it all
started.

The trio move through the casino. Jones absorbs all the
movement and noise.

DON VINCENCE
This is the backbone of it all.
I built it from, er...borrowed
money, and it has always turned a
profit for me. A large profit.

They pass by roulette wheels and one-armed bandits.

JONES
It must take a lot of bags to
carry all your money in.

DON VINCENCE
(laughs)
I like you, Jones. You've got a
sense of humour. But, you know
that is very close to the truth.
Come in here.

They come to a strong metal door. An armed guard stands
aside to let them pass.

INT. COUNTING ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Don Vincence leads Jones inside.

JONES
What's all this?

Workers pile money, count money, sort money, money -
everywhere.

DON VINCENCE
This is the fruit of it all.
Money! Lots of it! Just don't stay
in here too long, or you'll get
greedy.

He slaps Jones on the back. Security monitors watch their
every move.

JONES
It's very impressive.

DON VINCENCE
I've come a long way. From being
dirt poor on a farm in Italy, to
all this. It really is something,
huh?

Don pulls out a cigar, and offers one to Jones. He tucks it into Jones's pocket. They walk.

INT. DON'S OFFICE - CONTINUOUS

DON VINSCENCE

My life has been one fantastic roller-coaster ride. I've been all over the world, to foreign countries, and their customs...not to mention the women - but that's our little secret. The book will be dedicated to my grandchildren. It would truly be a shame if all the stories that are in me were to never see the light of day, wouldn't it?

JONES

Yes it would.

A GUNSHOT rings out and tears through the window, barely missing Don.

DON VINSCENCE

You see, Jones? I lead a charmed life. But forever? Many have tried to take away from me that which is mine. But, they have never succeeded. Well, it's been nice talking to you. Get started. Get him out of here, Joey

JONES

Started with what?

DON VINSCENCE

You're a writer - use your imagination. Start with my youth, it's a rags to riches story.

He shakes Jones's hand and pulls out a machine gun. Tiny stands at the window, firing back. Jones stares after them wide-eyed. Joey pulls out his gun, and leads Jones back into the tunnel.

INT. TUNNEL - CONTINUOUS

JOEY

Come, on. Move it.

He shoves Jones back into the Khaos office.

INT. KHAOS OFFICE - CONTINUOUS

Jones stumbles for the door and exits.

JOEY
Now get out of here.

Cathy comes running with a shotgun.

EXT. CASINO - CONTINUOUS

GUNSHOTS ring out. SIRENS blare. SCREAMS. Jones turns the corner just in time to see a LARGE BLACK VAN WITH MEN WITH GUNS. They tear away from the casino, shooting, POLICE in pursuit. Don and Tiny come out the front door of the casino, guns drawn. Jones walks away quickly.

INT. BAR - EVENING

Jones sits, drinking.

REPORTER (ON TV)
And now with the latest breaking news. A gun battle erupted today outside the Stardust Casino. Police say it was a rival gang hit that is believed to be mob related...

JONES
Oh, great.

REPORTER (ON TV)
The owner of the casino, and Mayoral candidate, Donald "Don" Vinsence was unavailable for comment...

The old drunk comes up and slaps Jones on the back.

OLD DRUNK
Hoya doin' pardner?

JONES
Ow.

EXT. JONES'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

From the street we can see Jones through his window as he sits and types.

INT. JONES'S APARTMENT - CONTINUOUS

JONES
(reading)
Let's see..."When I was a boy in Italy, I never dreamed I'd end up here".
(sits back)
What am I getting myself into?

The phone RINGS.

JONES
(into phone)

Hello?

ESMERELDA (V.O.)
Hello, Jones. How are you?

JONES
Not so great. Did you see my new boss on the news?

ESMERELDA (V.O.)
Yes, it's terrible.

JONES
I think I need a new career.

ESMERELDA (V.O.)
Just hang in there, ok?

JONES
I'll try. Listen, I've got a surprise for you tomorrow.

ESMERELDA (V.O.)
Oh, I love surprises. What is it?

JONES
You are going to have to wait until tomorrow to find out. Let's just say that you will be very happy with it.

EXT. RACE TRACK - DAY

Esmerelda comes screaming by in a stock car and comes to a stop in front of Jones and an instructor.

JONES
Wow, that was great.

INSTRUCTOR
I've never seen anything like it. She's a natural. You did the right thing by enrolling her in our school.

Esmerelda takes her helmet off.

ESMERELDA
That faster I drive, the better I am.

INSTRUCTOR
I never would have believed it.

It's the slow speeds she has trouble with.

JONES

I can attest to that.

She smacks Jones with the helmet in his stomach.

JONES

Ow.

INT. TAXI - CONTINUOUS

Esmerelda grips the wheel.

ESMERELDA

Oh, Jones that was so great.
Getting to drive a real race car.

JONES

You were very good.

ESMERELDA

I owe it all to you.

JONES

It's my pleasure to see you so happy. Look out!

Esmerelda swerves the car to avoid Madame De Manuel as she walks down the street, impeccably dressed as Euro-trash. A poodle chases her, barking and biting at her feet.

JONES

I wish that dog would eat her.

ESMERELDA

Me too.

EXT. KHAOS OFFICE - CONTINUOUS

Jones exits Esmerelda's taxi. He waves to her.

INT. DON'S OFFICE - DAY

Jones enters.

DON VINCENCE

Jones, my boy! How are you? Have you got some writing for me?

JONES

Yes I do.

DON VINCENCE

Okay. Let me see it.

Jones hands over some papers.

DON VINCENCE

(reads out loud)

"When I was a poor farm boy in Italy, I never dreamed I'd make it in the big city. Sure, that's what I did actually dream about, but I just never thought it would come true." Heh, that is a good beginning Jones! I think you are off to a good start.

JONES

Thank you.

DON VINCENCE

(to Joey)

What do you think of this?

JOEY

It's good.

TONY

Yeah, boss. Youse is a real Cinderella story.

The Don laughs.

DON VINCENCE

I want you to write about the casino next. I want you to write about how I made lots of money with it and gave jobs to everyone.

Don offers his hand.

DON VINCENCE

Welcome aboard, Jones.

JONES

(weakly)

Thanks.

Cathy enters, whispering something in Don's ear. Cathy exits.

DON VINCENCE

Make yourself at home, Jones.
We'll be right back.

Exit Don Vincence, Tiny, and Joey.

Jones is left alone. He looks around, walking over to the security monitors.

Jones sees Don Vincence, Tiny and Joey walking through the alley. Joey opens the trunk of the car, revealing a man

inside, tied up and gagged. Tiny pulls out three baseball bats from the trunk. They drag the man out of sight.

JONES

Oh, my god.

Jones spills his drink over himself. He leaves.

INT. JONES'S APARTMENT- NIGHT

Jones stares at the phone.

JONES

I gotta do it.

He picks it up and dials.

JONES

Hello? Cathy? Is Don there? Ok, thanks. Don Vinscence? This is Jones. Yes, your writer. Listen, I am having a lot of trouble with your book. I don't think I will be able to finish it. I'm willing to give your money back, and everything. I...

The line goes dead. He stares at the receiver.

JONES

What? He hung up.

A KNOCK comes at his door. Jones creeps towards it, peeking through the eyehole. It's Esmerelda.

JONES

Hi, baby.

INT. JONES'S APARTMENT - A FEW MINUTES LATER

The couple cuddles on the couch.

ESMERELDA

Are you feeling any better?

JONES

I'm worried about this Don Vinscence. I don't know if I can trust him. He's not a nice man.

ESMERELDA

But, you feeling better? You're not seeing anymore ghosts?

JONES

Sometimes, but not as much.

ESMERELDA

No?

JONES

I don't really think it was a ghost. I guess it was my mind playing tricks on me because I was so stressed over getting published.

ESMERELDA

Maybe your dreams came true and cured you?

JONES

But I could have dreamed for a better publisher.

ESMERELDA

I'm not talking about those dreams.

She moves in close and kisses him. The door SMASHES OPEN.

ESMERELDA

Aaaagghhh! What's that?

Jones jumps up. It's Tiny. He pushes Jones back into the room, and shuts the door.

TINY

I'm here to remind you of your deadline, Jonesy.

Tiny pushes Jones into a lamp, smashing it, and knocks down the bookcase.

TINY

Next time, your arms, then legs, and head. Da boss is getting nervous. He wants the book finished. Understand?

He takes Jones' head in his hand, and slaps his cheek. Jones nods weakly.

TINY

Now get dressed Jones, we're going out.

EXT. JONES'S APARTMENT - CONTINUOUS

A long black limo waits. Tiny hauls Jones out by the back of the neck. The door opens. Tiny shoves Jones in.

INT. LIMO - CONTINUOUS

Don Vinscence sits, very sullen, staring at Jones. He plays with a cigarette lighter, lighting it repeatedly. The limo

starts off.

JONES

You wanted to see me?

DON VINCENCE

What do you think you're doing?

JONES

What? Someone just stopped over.
What do you mean?

DON VINCENCE

Do you take me for a fool?

JONES

I didn't do...

DON VINCENCE

'Cause if there's one thing I
can't stand it's disloyalty.

Jones swallows hard. Tiny eyeballs him in the rear-view.

DON VINCENCE

There are many things that go in
in this world that you are not
aware of. Many situations that
you should stay out off. Just do
what you are told. Get it?

JONES

Yes.

DON VINCENCE

Good. I knew you were a bright
one.

The car comes to a stop.

DON VINCENCE

I think you know what's good for
you. And that's to be loyal to
me. Capeesch? Stay in touch.

Jones nods.

DON VINCENCE

Good boy. Get out.

The Don opens the latch, and the door swings open. Jones
crawls out.

EXT. LAKESHORE - NIGHT

Jones exits the limo, the door closes, and it speeds off.

JONES

Bastard.

Jones walks to a bridge. He looks over the railing at the long drop below. He spits over the side and watches it fall. He steps up on the ledge - a very long way down. Suddenly, a voice behind him:

BURROUGHS

I wouldn't do that if I were you.

Burroughs comes to the edge of the bridge, a vision in ectoplasm. Jones jumps back to safety, startled.

JONES

(sighs)

Do what? You scared me.

BURROUGHS

Writers always hate their own work at times. Suicide is very bad for your karma, you know? You'll come back as a wart on a hog's backside, or a dung beetle, and you know what they eat.

JONES

Kill myself? Never! But it would be a good way of getting away from you. Unless it's all in my head.

Jones holds his head and gives it a shake.

BURROUGHS

Don't be so sure, sonny.

JONES

Ok, let's say you are real. What are you doing here?

BURROUGHS

Just out for some air. How's the book business?

JONES

Not good, or did you already know that? Life sucks!

Burroughs tries to lean on the rail, but passes through it.

BURROUGHS

You get used to it.

JONES

Get lost.

BURROUGHS

No need for harshness. Optimism is what we need here. Maybe there is something I could do for a you, and something you can help me with. What do you say?

Burroughs raises his eyebrows slightly.

JONES

Wow, I must be crazy, making a deal with my imaginary friend. That's what you are right? Or, are you some kind of weirdo following me around? Playing magic disappearing tricks on me? I'm getting pretty sick of it.

Jones lunges for Burroughs, but instead of pushing him back, Jones flies right through him to the ground.

JONES

Some moves you've got there old timer.

Jones goes to hit him, and passes through him again. Jones stares at his hands.

JONES

What is this?

BURROUGHS

I'm a ghost. The name's Burroughs. I was killed by Don Vinscence a short time ago, and now I wander, and I will continue to do so, until my murderer gets what's coming to him. Then, I will be at peace, and can leave this world once and for all.

JONES

A real ghost, huh?

Jones passes his hand through Burroughs, back and forth.

JONES

Wow. So I'm not nuts. I'm actually relived. A ghost I can deal with.

BURROUGHS

Don Vinscence hired me to write his book before you, but I refused to make his story appear better than it really was. I wouldn't sugar coat it. I detest lies. So, he had me killed before I could

talk. Now you are in the same danger.

Flashback to the Don shooting Burroughs for a moment, then back.

JONES

I already knew I was in trouble.

Jones turns away, but Burroughs appears in front of him.

BURROUGHS

What I want is revenge. To put Don Vinscence away. For good. If you could get some hard proof of his illegal activities, perhaps a case can be started against him. Now you are on the inside, perhaps you could find something?

JONES

That sounds very dangerous. I'd be killed if he found me out.

BURROUGHS

He's killed many others already. But if he's away behind bars you would be much safer. And, you would never see me again. I will leave you alone, in peace.

JONES

Why don't you just go haunt Don? Make his life a living hell, not mine?

BURROUGHS

I can't get near him. He is employing the services of a spiritual protector. There are magic charms in place to ward off the... ghosts. He's got Voodoo.

JONES

Now, really?

BURROUGHS

Come with me, I'll show you.

EXT. CASINO - NIGHT

Jones and Burroughs approach the casino. Burroughs hovers just off the ground.

BURROUGHS

Now, you see those objects by the front door?

INSERT: He looks at the straw dolls.

JONES

Yes.

BURROUGHS

That is his first line of defense.
There is also a powerful altar of
voodoo in Don's office. Now watch
this.

Burroughs begins to fly through the air. When he gets near
the casino, he is stopped by a force field. He cannot
penetrate it, though it moves like elastic.

BURROUGHS

You see?

JONES

I'll be damned.

The door opens.

BURROUGHS

Over here, quickly.

Jones and Burroughs hide behind some bushes. Don and Tiny
drag a man out of the casino, and into the alley. Tiny
shoots him in the head.

JONES

I think I'm gonna be sick.

BURROUGHS

Let's go.

They turn away and leave.

EXT. PARK - CONTINUOUS

Jones sits on the merry-go-round, Burroughs floats above.

JONES

This is much worse than I thought.

BURROUGHS

Makes no difference to me, really.
I just want revenge.

JONES

Show me what to do.

BURROUGHS

Alright.

A black van pulls up to the park. The thugs stumble out,

bottles and guns in hand.

JONES

Who's that?

BURROUGHS

The mob rivals. They want to push Don Vinscence out of the town and take over.

JONES

Are they that strong?

BURROUGHS

No, but they think they are.

JONES

They're coming over here.

BURROUGHS

They must have seen us watching the casino.

JONES

What are we gonna do?

BURROUGHS

I'll handle this.

Burroughs flies up, and dives straight at the thugs in the van. Burroughs become very large, and terrifying, making a terrible WAILING noise.

THUG

What the hell?

The thugs start firing at Burroughs, to no effect. Burroughs flies right through their van, and scares the bejeesuz out of them, HOWLING in their faces. They are seriously freaked.

SECOND THUG

Let's get out of here, man!

The thugs get aboard and peel out.

BURROUGHS

(laughs)

Being dead does have it's advantages!

JONES

I'm glad to see you are haunting the bad guys for once.

BURROUGHS

Shut up.

EXT. ESMERELDA'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

Jones and Burroughs walk up the stairs.

JONES

This is Esmerelda's place. Now,
just let me do the talking,
alright?

BURROUGHS

Sure Jones.

Jones knocks on Esmerelda's door.

ESMERELDA (V.O.)

Who is it?

JONES

It's me.

She opens the door, and goes into his arms.

ESMERELDA

Oh, Jones. I was worried about
you.

JONES

I want you to meet someone.

Esmerelda sees Burroughs floating in the air.

ESMERELDA

(shocked)

What?! Jones? Who's this?

JONES

This is the ghost.

BURROUGHS

Jones has told me a lot about you.

ESMERELDA

(makes sign of the
cross)

Oh, my.

JONES

Now, there's no need to get
alarmed. This is Burroughs, and
he's a good ghost.

BURROUGHS

Pleased to meet you.

ESMERELDA

I've see you before.

One of the neighbors opens their door and looks out.

JONES

We better get inside.

Burroughs goes through the wall, and Jones and Esmerelda enter.

INT. ESMERELDA'S APARTMENT - CONTINUOUS

Esmerelda sinks down on the couch under a poster of a race car driver.

ESMERELDA

I think I need some water.

JONES

This is the ghost I was seeing.

ESMERELDA

Oh, yes? A real ghost.

She looks at Burroughs closer.

BURROUGHS

Hello.

JONES

He needs our help, and I need his.

BURROUGHS

That's right.

ESMERELDA

What could we help him with?

JONES

He was killed by Don Vinscence, and now that I'm in danger too...

BURROUGHS

(cuts in)

You are in great danger. You don't want to end up like me.

ESMERELDA

But what can we do?

BURROUGHS

I need you to get the voodoo charms away from the casino. That way I can lead Jones to the evidence he needs to put Vinscence away for good.

ESMERELDA

(makes sign of the
cross)

I hope you are right. Oh, what a
crazy country. What are we gonna
do?

JONES

I have to meet with Don tomorrow.
Esmerelda, you go into the casino
ahead of me. Wait a few minutes,
then make an excuse for Don to
come into the casino to talk to
you.

ESMERELDA

What should I say?

JONES

Say that one of the machines is
broken and took your money, and
you demand to see the owner right
away. Scream and yell. Make a
scene if you have to.

ESMERELDA

Alright.

JONES

Then, Burroughs can come in and
we'll get what we need.

BURROUGHS

Good plan.

JONES

They we can meet later at a safe
place.

ESMERELDA

But where? They might be looking
for us?

JONES

I'll figure it out. Don't worry.
Just get out of there as fast as
you can after Don is finished
talking to you. Okay?

ESMERELDA

Yes, Jones.

JONES

You better wear a disguise so no
one recognizes you. I don't want
to get you into this if I can
avoid it.

ESMERELDA

Si. This is dangerous work.

EXT. CASINO - DAY

Jones and Esmerelda (wearing a blonde wig) pause outside the casino. Burroughs floats nearby.

JONES

I like you as a blonde.

She swats him away.

ESMERELDA

How are we gonna get those charm dolls out of there with that guy in the way?

A bouncer paces in front of the door and the dolls.

BURROUGHS

Leave that to me.

Burroughs flies off and buzzes by the door.

BURROUGHS

Boo. Looking for me?

BOUNCER

Hey, asshole.

The bodyguard gives chase, pulling out his gun.

JONES

Ok, let's get them.

Esmerelda and Jones sneak up to the front door, and each grab a straw doll.

JONES

(whispers)

Ok, hurry.

They carry the dolls to Esmerelda's taxi, putting them in the trunk.

JONES

Ok, give me a couple of minutes. After we're done, get someplace safe and wait for my call.

ESMERELDA

I will. Be careful, Jones.

She hugs Jones. Burroughs appears near the taxi.

BURROUGHS

Now I can get a bit closer. But,
you still need to get the charms
out of his office.

JONES
Right. Let's go.

EXT. KHAOS PUBLISHERS - CONTINUOUS

Burroughs floats through the wall of Khaos Publishers. It's
deserted. He enters the tunnel with Jones. Burroughs is
repelled by a force field, Jones continues on.

BURROUGHS
This is as far as I can go.

JONES
Ok. Cross your fingers.

INT. DON'S OFFICE - CONTINUOUS

Jones knocks on the inner door. Joey answers.

JOEY
What do you want?

JONES
Don wants to see me.

JOEY
Is that right?

JONES
Yeah.

JOEY
Come in.

INT. CASINO - CONTINUOUS

Esmerelda makes her way into the casino. She turns her head
around at all the lights.

ESMERELDA
Ay, caramba. It's pretty. Too
bad this place is filled with so
many bad things.

She walks until she finds a slot machine.

ESMERELDA
Here we go.

She puts in a coin, and pulls the handle.

INT. COUNTING ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Don Vinscence's guards are positioned throughout. Don leads Jones around as Joey shadows them.

DON VINSCENCE

You see, Jones I have made some additions to the casino. I have installed a printing press. With it I can print our upcoming book, perhaps print a few other things as well.

He leads Jones to a door, and opens it. Inside a press runs. INSERT: money is being printed.

JONES

Wow.

DON VINSCENCE

So, don't write about this, or I'll have to kill you.

The Don and his guards laugh a hearty laugh. He closes the door.

DON VINSCENCE

So, Jones. How soon do I get the book?

JONES

Well, I'm gonna need a few more days.

DON VINSCENCE

The west coast Don is gonna have his book launch in two weeks, so I need that manuscript Jones. I can't let him beat me to the best-seller list! Plus, my PR is in the toilet these days.

JONES

I'm working as fast as I can.

DON VINSCENCE

Don't take too long, Jones. I want to convince you of my intentions to get this book done. Come back to my office for a moment.

INT. DON'S OFFICE - CONTINUOUS

Don hands an envelope to Jones. Jones looks through the pictures that Joey has taken: Jones on the street, Jones in his apartment, Jones and Esmerelda in bed.

JONES

You're not gonna to hurt me, are you?

DON VINSCENCE

We don't want to hurt you. But you owe me something.

JONES

I'll have the book done soon.

DON VINSCENCE

Now you are getting the right attitude. I need it very soon, Jones...

Cathy enters.

CATHY

Don, there's someone to see you in the casino. She's very upset.

DON VINSCENCE

Thank you Cathy. Stay put for a few minutes, Jones. Come on, Joey.

JONES

No problem.

Don, Joey and Cathy exit, leaving Jones alone. He watches them on the security monitor as they enter the casino.

Jones approaches the charm in the corner.

JONES

Yikes.

He knocks it down, scattering pieces of it all over the floor.

JONES

(calls out)

They're gone.

Burroughs enters.

BURROUGHS

What we need is in the filing cabinet.

Jones goes over to it, and begins tugging on it.

JONES

Locked.

BURROUGHS

He keeps the key under the desk.

Jones looks under the desk, and finds a key taped in place.

INSERT: a key taped under the desk.

BURROUGHS

Make it quick.

INT. CASINO - CONTINUOUS

Esmerelda stands in front of a one-armed bandit and cries.

DON VINCENCE

Are you alright Ma'am?

ESMERELDA

It took all my money. How am I
gonna pay my rent now? Waaaagh!

BACK IN THE OFFICE

Burroughs watches the security monitors as Jones searches
through the filing cabinet.

JONES

I got it.

Jones looks at the files; facts and figures, bank accounts.

BURROUGHS

Good. We better get going.

On the monitor, Tiny and Don walk through the casino.

BURROUGHS

Time to split.

Jones and Burroughs run to the tunnel.

INT. DON'S OFFICE - CONTINUOUS

Don and Joey enter.

DON VINCENCE

Damn kids shouldn't play if they
can't afford to lose.

JOEY

Are you gonna give her money back?

DON VINCENCE

I don't see why...What the hell?

Don stops dead when he sees the voodoo charm strewn across
the floor.

JOEY

Jones?

DON VINCENCE

Go get Tiny. Now.

EXT. PAYPHONE - CONTINUOUS

Jones dials. Burroughs hovers by the door.

IRS AGENT (V.O.)
Hello. Internal Revenue Service.

JONES
I have evidence that Don Vinscence
is evading taxes with his casino.

IRS AGENT (V.O.)
How do you know that?

JONES
I am mailing a package to you that
has all the details.

Jones hangs up.

OUTSIDE THE PHONE BOX

Jones deposits the package in a mailbox.

BURROUGHS
Now, let's get you somewhere safe.

INT. JONES'S APARTMENT - DAY

Burroughs keeps watch outside the window as Jones packs up
some clothes and belongings into a small suitcase. Jones
picks up the phone and dials. It keeps ringing.

JONES
Esmerelda, where are you? Damn.

He dials another number.

JONES
Freddie? How's it going?

FREDDIE (V.O.)
It's ok.

JONES
I've got a problem here. How's
that car of yours running?

FREDDIE (V.O.)
Good.

JONES
How fast can you get here?

EXT. JONES'S APARTMENT - CONTINUOUS

Burroughs and Jones sits on the steps.

JONES

Come on Freddie, where are you?

A car pulls up. Freddie jumps out and opens the trunk.

FREDDIE

Jones. Sorry I'm late.

JONES

That's ok, It's just my life at stake.

Jones looks around.

JONES

Sure you weren't followed?

FREDDIE

Yeah. Do you see anybody around?

JONES

No, I guess not.

Burroughs stands nearby.

FREDDIE

Who's that?

JONES

A good friend of mine.

FREDDIE

He looks a little pale.

JONES

I'll explain later. We gotta go.

They get in and drive off.

INT. CAR - CONTINUOUS

Freddie drives down the highway, sneaking glances at Burroughs who flies above the car.

JONES

Freddie, can I use your phone?

Freddie hands it over. Jones dials the cell phone.

JONES

(into phone)

Hello, Esmerelda, this is Jones.
Where are you? I'll try you again
later. Bye.

EXT. HIGHWAY - EVENING

Burroughs floats above the car. He hovers next to the driver's window.

BURROUGHS

You can stop here.

Freddie pulls to a stop next to an old warehouse. They get out.

JONES

Thanks a million, Freddie. Don't tell anyone where I am, or that you even saw me, alright?

FREDDIE

(looking at Burroughs)
Geez, this is spooky, Jones.

Freddie quickly gets back into his car and tears off.

EXT. BURROUGHS'S LOFT - CONTINUOUS

Burroughs and Jones walk up to a seedy looking old warehouse.

BURROUGHS

This is my place. Come in. We should get off the streets.

Burroughs looks back, making sure they are not followed.

INT. BURROUGHS'S LOFT - CONTINUOUS

Sheets and stacks of paper litter the room. Books, of every kind and size are stacked on furniture, and bulging from bookcases, which threaten to spill their contents.

A CAT rushes to greet Burroughs. He bends down to greet it.

BURROUGHS

Oh, my little baby. My precious, precious dear. How are you Fletch?

Burroughs tries takes the cat into his lap, but it slips through his ghostly fingers.

JONES

You like cats, eh?

BURROUGHS

I sure do. Do you think you could feed my cat, Jones? He's very hungry.

JONES

Of course, I'll take care of him.

BURROUGHS

You should be safe here for a while.

Jones lays down on a couch and falls asleep. Fletch comes and snuggles up with him.

EXT. STREET - NIGHT

Esmerelda holds her cell phone to her head. She hangs it up.

ESMERELDA

(to stuffed parrot)

How do you like that Polly? Where do you think Jones is? Think he dumped me? Probably. Men! I'll show him.

EXT. PLAYGIRL CLUB - CONTINUOUS

Esmerelda pulls up to this male stripper club.

ESMERELDA

They'll never find me here.
(laughs)

INT. JONES'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

Tiny kicks in the door, gun drawn. He puts on the lights and looks around. Don enters.

TINY

He's not here, boss.

DON VINCENCE

The bastard must have run town.

TINY

Want me to track him?

DON VINCENCE

I've got a better idea. One that involves a lot less leg work. Where does his girlfriend live?

EXT. ESMERELDA'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

Don Vincence and Tiny wait outside the door. Don Vincence nods. Tiny takes a short run to the door, and breaks it open. They run inside.

INT. APARTMENT - CONTINUOUS

A woman starts screaming in her bed, as Don Vincence and Tiny stand there, dumbfounded. Don Vincence slaps Tiny on

the head.

DON VINSCENCE

I thought you knew where we were going. This isn't the right place!! Idiot!!

He walks off, and leaves Tiny staring at the woman. Tiny hurries from the room.

IN THE HALLWAY

Tiny kicks in another door. It's dark. They flick on a light. There's a lump on the bed. Tiny creeps forward, quietly. He reaches for the covers, and yanks them off to reveal a pile of stuffed animals.

TINY

Goddamn it.

DON VINSCENCE

Let's go.

They exit.

INT. PLAYGIRL CLUB - CONTINUOUS

Music plays as Esmerelda guzzles champagne with a Latin playboy-type, (slicked back hair, gold chains skimpy gold g-string).

STRIPPER

Where is your boyfriend?

ESMERELDA

How the hell should I know? He's not calling me.

She holds up her cell phone, upside down. She's a little drunk. He bounces her across his lap.

EXT. STREET- NIGHT

Don and Tiny cruise. They stop for some burgers at a drive through. Tiny leans his big head out the driver's window.

MCEMPLOYEE (V.O.)

May I take your order, please?

TINY

(to microphone)

I'll have three cheeseburgers, a large milkshake- strawberry, two chilidogs, and a coke.

MCEMPLOYEE (V.O.)

Will that be all?

DON VINCENCE
Hey, what's that?

Esmerelda's taxi rolls by.

TINY
That's her.

MCEMPLOYEE (V.O.)
Sorry. Could you repeat that, sir?

DON VINCENCE
Let's go.

Tiny puts the car in reverse, and they get out of the line.

INT. ESMERELDA'S TAXI - CONTINUOUS

Esmerelda drives on.

She sings with the radio, driving happily. In the back seat is the male stripper. In her mirror, a big car comes up close to her. She watches it, speeding up.

ESMERELDA
(to stripper)
Hold on to something, sweetheart.

They come to a stop light. Tiny pulls up next to her. Don rolls down his window.

DON VINCENCE
(drawing gun)
Where is Jones?

Esmerelda's eyes go wide. The light turns green, and she peels out, tearing ahead of the big car.

DON VINCENCE
Shit. Get her!

EXT. STREET - CONTINUOUS

Tiny follows in pursuit. Esmerelda gets out way ahead, and rounds a corner. Tiny follows. She goes down a one-way street. Tiny follows. A police car spots the limo, and gives chase, sirens going.

Esmerelda races through an empty shopping mall parking lot, Tiny and the police car in pursuit.

She turns down a small alley, only big enough for her car to fit in. Tiny tries, but the limo get caught in the narrow passage, sparks flying. The police catch them.

INT. ESMERELDA'S TAXI - CONTINUOUS

ESMERELDA

Whew, that was close. But I'm
just too fast for them.

She dials her cell phone.

JONES (V.O.)

Hi, this is Jones, I'm not home
right now...

She hangs up.

ESMERELDA

Jones, where are you? Serves him
right for abandoning me.

She looks at the stripper in the mirror. He's a real Latin-
lover type. She blows him a kiss.

Her phone rings. The stripper goes to answer it.

PLAYBOY

J'es?? Who is this, eh?

EXT. PAYPHONE - CONTINUOUS

Jones, surprised, holds the phone away from his ear.

INT. ESMERELDA'S TAXI - CONTINUOUS

Esmerelda goes ballistic at the playboy:

ESMERELDA

Who do you think you are answering
my phone? Huh? You're not my
boyfriend! Give my that phone!

She grabs the phone back.

ESMERELDA

Hello? Jones! What happened to
you? I thought you ran out on me!

INTERCUT WITH

EXT. STREET - CONTINUOUS

Jones stands at a payphone.

JONES

No, I didn't. I'm hiding out.
I've been trying to call you.

ESMERELDA (V.O.)

Where are you?

JONES

I didn't want to leave a message on your machine, in case they got into your apartment and searched it or something.

ESMERELDA (V.O.)

Who? Don Vinscence? He just tried to run me down.

JONES

Oh, no. I'm sorry to drag you into all of this. You better not go back to your apartment.

ESMERELDA (V.O.)

I thought you had abandoned me. I'm scared, Jones.

JONES

You'd better come and hide out with me for a while.

ESMERELDA

Is everything alright?

JONES

I hope so. But, it could get dangerous for a while. I've give you the directions...

ESMERELDA

Just a second.
(puts down phone)

She SQUEALS the car to a smoking stop, and gets out to open the door for the stripper.

ESMERELDA

Ok, honey. Out!

stripper

What? I thought we were gonna party?

ESMERELDA

Here's your party.

She boots him on the ass, and hops back in the taxi, driving off, leaving him in his skimpy clothes.

INT. BURROUGHS'S PLACE - NIGHT

A KNOCK. Jones opens the door for Esmerelda.

JONES

Are you sure you weren't followed?

ESMERELDA

Yes.

JONES

Did you park your car somewhere
they can't see it?

ESMERELDA

It's in the underground lot across
the street.

JONES

Good, good. We need to be careful.

Fletch comes running up to Esmerelda.

ESMERELDA

Oh, what a cutie.

Burroughs appears.

BURROUGHS

Hello.

Burroughs floats above his cat, trying to pet it, but his
hand goes right through.

BURROUGHS

These young men are so impulsive,
eh Fletch?

INT. KHAOS PUBLISHING- DAY

Cathy sits opening the mail. One letter catches her
attention: "IRS". She goes into the tunnel.

INT. DON'S OFFICE - DAY

Cathy brings the letter to Don.

CATHY

You better take a look at this.

DON VINCENCE

What's this?

He studies the letter.

CATHY

How should I know? A letter from
the IRS.

He tears it open and scans it.

DON VINCENCE

I think we're in trouble. We

gotta hide everything.

Don starts pulling files out of the cabinet.

EXT. BURROUGHS'S LOFT - DAY

Jones runs across the street carrying a shopping bag. He looks to see if anyone has seen him. There's no one there.

INT. BURROUGHS'S LOFT - CONTINUOUS

Jones enters.

JONES

Look at this.

He holds up a newspaper. INSERT: "DON VINSCENCE TO GO ON TRIAL".

JONES

Isn't that great?

BURROUGHS

Hmm. Maybe. He's got deep pockets. I'll have to do some behind the scenes work to ensure the trial goes ahead.

ESMERELDA

You think he can get out of it?

BURROUGHS

Better believe it. Corruption runs deep in this town.

JONES

I just want to get out of this mess, and write my new book. But, right now it's no good.

Jones stares at the laptop.

BURROUGHS

May I?

Jones turns the laptop to where Burroughs can read it.

BURROUGHS

Hmm. Not bad. Shows promise. Good metaphors.

JONES

Yeah?

BURROUGHS

Oh, yeah.

JONES

I'm kinda stuck on this passage.
Writer's block.

He pats Jones on the shoulder, but goes right through him.

BURROUGHS

You just need to get back in touch with the unconscious stream in all of us. You see, there is a specific mental state which allows one to be in sync, in flow with the universe. In accordance with all desires, or rather apart from them...It was a big favorite with the Buddha - providing that all-persuasiveness.

JONES

That is heavy. I just don't get it. I've got too much stress.

Esmerelda comes over and rubs Jones's shoulders.

ESMERELDA

(to Burroughs)

You know about all this stuff?
Because you are dead?

BURROUGHS

I just realized it is all. Now I'm not restricted by the bonds of time, space, and causality. But, really, enough of all this sort of talk - What are you writing??

JONES

A one-armed man who finds love in the arms of a lovely four armed woman.

BURROUGHS

An autobiography?

JONES

(laughs)

Sure. It carries the important themes - acceptance, redemption, you know...

Burroughs nods.

BURROUGHS

(looks at Jones and
Esmerelda together)

Yes, I know.

EXT. BURROUGHS'S LOFT - CONTINUOUS

Freddie slows his car near the entrance. He cranes his neck.

FREDDIE

Now where was this place?

EXT. STREET - CONTINUOUS

Joey follows Freddie slowly in his car.

Freddie parks and get out.

FREDDIE

Oh, yeah. Here it is.

INT. JOEY'S CAR - CONTINUOUS

Joey gets out a gun with a telescopic lens.

INSERT: through the gun sight, Freddie takes a case of beer from his trunk.

Joey follows his every move, finger tightening on the trigger. Freddie walks towards the loft.

INT. BURROUGHS'S LOFT - CONTINUOUS

A KNOCK at the door. All eyes go to the door.

JONES

Quick, hide.

EXT. BURROUGHS'S LOFT - CONTINUOUS

Burroughs sticks his head out of the door.

Freddie jumps back.

FREDDIE

Ahh!

Joey follows Freddie's movements the gun sight.

INSERT: Freddie in the gun sight.

EXT. BURROUGHS'S LOFT - CONTINUOUS

Freddie tries the door. It's locked.

INT. JOEY'S CAR - CONTINUOUS

INSERT: Joey sights Freddie in the cross hairs, and pulls the trigger.

CLICK. Nothing happens. Gun jam.

JOEY

Shit.

EXT. BURROUGHS'S LOFT - CONTINUOUS

Jones opens the door and pulls Freddie inside. The door closes.

INT. BURROUGHS'S LOFT - DAY

FREDDIE

(to Burroughs)

Hi I'm Freddie, and I don't think I caught your name, if I'm not seeing things.

BURROUGHS

Burroughs. And no, you're not seeing things.

JONES

He's not a ghost, don't worry. He does 'magic tricks'.

FREDDIE

Thank god for that.

BURROUGHS

Come over here, I'll show you a little trick.

Burroughs sits by the computer. It turns on by itself.

FREDDIE

That was cool.

BURROUGHS

(to Jones)

Start up the program called "Khaos". It will help with your writing.

Jones works the computer. Freddie pops open some beers and passes them around.

INSERT: on the computer screen as words are sampled, cut-up, and rearranged.

JONES

Wow, this is great.

BURROUGHS

Go ahead, scan your work into it, and see what the machine comes up with. Order will come from chaos.

EXT. BURROUGHS'S LOFT - CONTINUOUS

Joey pulls a bomb out of the trunk.

INT. MOTHER MODELL'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

Mother whistles as she cleans up. The door is KICKED IN.

MOTHER MODELL

Ahhh! Who are you?

TINY

This is about your son, Jones.
You had been come with me.

MOTHER MODELL

You broke my door.

She throws a flowerpot at him. It hits Tiny on the forehead.

TINY

Don't make this hard on yourself.
You're coming with me.

Tiny grabs her and lifts her over his shoulder.

INT. BURROUGHS'S LOFT - CONTINUOUS

Esmerelda takes a look through the computer.

ESMERELDA

It looks like you finished Don's
book.

JONES

That's as far as I got before I
got all stressed out and decided
to quit.

ESMERELDA

Don't worry. Just relax.

Jones lies back on the couch, and closes his eyes.

EXT. BURROUGHS'S LOFT - CONTINUOUS

Joey plants the bomb under Esmerelda's car.

INT. BURROUGHS'S LOFT - MORNING

Jones sleeps on the couch, next to Esmerelda.

Burroughs floats into the room.

BURROUGHS

Jones. Don has got your mother.
He's going to kill her. You
better get that book to him right

now.

JONES
(waking up)
Who? My mother?

Esmerelda's cell phone rings. Jones answers the phone.

INTERCUT WITH:

INT. DON'S OFFICE - CONTINUOUS

The Don is on the phone.

DON VINSCENCE
Jones!

The phone is filled with static.

JONES (V.O.)
Hello?

DON VINSCENCE
There's someone you should talk to.

Mother Modell is tied to a chair. Don puts the phone to her ear.

MOTHER
Jones! Don't listen to him.
Don't worry about me. Save
yourself!

DON VINSCENCE
There - ya hear that?! Be here in
two hours, with the book, or else.

JONES (V.O.)
But the drive itself is two
hours...Hello?

The line goes dead.

INT. BURROUGHS'S LOFT - CONTINUOUS

Jones looks at his watch: 10:02

JONES
...two hours...

Jones puts the phone down.

ESMERELDA
What is it?

JONES
How fast can you drive?

BURROUGHS

I'll meet you there. I have some associates to contact.

EXT. BURROUGHS'S LOFT - CONTINUOUS

They jump into Esmerelda's taxi and tear off.

INSERT: the bomb under the car.

Joey follows, his finger on the detonator switch.

EXT. HIGHWAY - CONTINUOUS

Esmerelda's taxi flies by.

INT. ESMERELDA'S TAXI - CONTINUOUS

Jones is frantically typing on the computer.

ESMERELDA

How's it going.

He looks at his watch.

JONES

Fast. I gotta finish this thing. Or at least make it look good.

ESMERELDA

So, why didn't you call me right away? I wondered what happened to you.

JONES

What are you talking about? I'm a little busy here.

ESMERELDA

After we left the casino. You said to go and wait for your call. I did, for hours. Were you going to just forget about me?

JONES

Forget about you? Not at all. I tried to call you several times.

ESMERELDA

That's very good! I like that one!

JONES

You're over-reacting.

ESMERELDA

Huh?

She brings the car to a very sudden stop.

INSERT: the bomb comes loose and flies off the car and down a sewer. It EXPLODES.

ESMERELDA

What was that?

JONES

Come on. We can fight later.

ESMERELDA

Really? We can fight later?

JONES

I should've known you were trouble.

Cars start to honk behind them. Joey stops his car by the sewer and looks down into it.

JOEY

I'll be damned.

INT. DON'S OFFICE - CONTINUOUS

Tiny dumps a tray of fast-food burgers in front of Jones's mother. He unties Mom's arms and then grabs a burger.

TINY

Enjoy it, mom. Your last meal.

MOTHER

You rat bastard.

TINY

(laughs)

Yep. That's me. Enjoy.

EXT. STREET - CONTINUOUS

Esmerelda's taxi flies past, until it's forced to slow in the gridlock up ahead.

JONES

I don't think we can make it.

ESMERELDA

What should we do?

Jones glances up at the clock 11:45.

JONES

Get on the sidewalk.

Esmerelda gets onto the sidewalk, sending people running out of the way. She HONKS the horn violently, dodging

pedestrians with expert skill.

ESMERELDA

Come on! Move it!

INT. DON'S OFFICE - CONTINUOUS

Don pulls a chair up to mother.

DON VINCENCE

That's a very talented son you have there, Ms. Model.

MOTHER MODELL

Who Jones? He never did anything good for me in his life.

DON VINCENCE

Are you sure you're not stretching the truth a bit. Every parent has some problems with their children. Jones has a talent. Even I can see that; it's a shame I have to kill him.

MOTHER MODELL

Kill him? But if he gives you what you want you can let him go.

DON VINCENCE

You see, you do care.

MOTHER MODELL

Of course I do. Even though I want to kill him myself sometimes. Why do you hurt innocent people? Jones is a good boy. He's just misguided.

DON VINCENCE

That sounds a lot like me.

MOTHER MODELL

See, you are not so different as you think.

DON VINCENCE

I like you. Too bad you will have to die.

EXT. KHAOS PUBLISHERS - CONTINUOUS

Esmerelda's taxi comes tearing into the parking lot. Jones and Esmerelda jump out.

JONES

Hurry.

Jones and Esmerelda run into the office.

Burroughs appears in a puff of smoke, flies over the roof and comes to a stop.

ROBBER GHOST PAUL

Hey, where you been?

BURROUGHS

Taking care of business. Now I need your help.

(to other ghost)

All of you. Now is the time to get your revenge. Come on! This is the plan.

The ghosts rally around Burroughs.

INT. DON'S OFFICE - CONTINUOUS

Don is sitting back, watching Mom. Tiny stands guard. Enter Cathy, Jones, and Esmerelda.

CATHY

Look who's here.

DON VINCENCE

Jones.

(looks at watch)

Just in time.

JONES

Mom!

MOTHER

Jones!

DON VINCENCE

Have you got it?

Jones throws the computer disk over to Don.

DON VINCENCE

Excellent. Cathy, go check this.

Don hands the disk to Cathy. She pops it into a computer and looks it over.

DON VINCENCE

You sure took your time, Jones. Your poor mother was worried.

JONES

We ran into a little traffic. Aren't you going to untie her?

DON VINSCENCE
In good time, Jones.

Joey enters.

DON VINSCENCE
She's a pretty good driver, huh
Joey? Got away from you?

JOEY
Maybe we should hire her, boss?

DON VINSCENCE
(laughs)
Joey you have a funny bone.

CATHY
It's all there. He finished it.

DON VINSCENCE
Well, that's it, then. Tiny, take
them all out back and waste them.

JONES
What?

DON VINSCENCE
Sorry Jones, but I don't want any
loose ends.

Jones lunges for Don, but Tiny grabs him.

TINY
Not so fast, tough guy.

JONES
(to Don)
I was right about you. You are a
killer.

DON VINSCENCE
It's just good business.

TINY
(grabs Esmerelda)
Let's go.

Burroughs appears with the other ghosts behind him.

BURROUGHS
Don, Vinscence! You thought you
had done away with us, but you can
not escape. We will bring you
to justice. You cannot escape us.

DON VINSCENCE
What is this?

ROBBER GHOST PAUL
You're finished, Vinscence.

JUDGE GHOST
Time to get some revenge from the
undead!

OTHER GHOSTS
(chanting and wailing)
Revenge! Revenge! Revenge!

The other ghosts, about twenty in all, begin to fly into the room. They circle Don, Joey, Cathy and Tiny. Tiny lets go of Jones and Esmerelda, and pulls out a gun.

GHOST
You killed me once, never again.

The group of ghosts rush at Don, who SHOOTs wildly, to no effect.

DON VINCENCE
Shoot them. Shoot!

Tiny and Joey open fire. Windows break, lights shatter. Several other casino bodyguards come running and enter the fray.

BURROUGHS
Your have no protection now. You
cannot banish us with bullets.
(to ghosts)
Get them!

The ghosts chase Don and his men out into the casino.

ROBBER GHOST PAUL
You can run, but you can't hid!
Ahahahahahahaa!

TINY
Ahhgg! No, stay away!

INT. CASINO - CONTINUOUS

The ghost fly into the casino, causing an even greater panic. Gamblers throw down their money and run. Others duck on the floor as the ghosts zoom around. The ghosts swarm around Don and his men. Women SCREAM.

DON VINCENCE
No. Leave me alone.

BURROUGHS
Never.

Tiny and Joey continue to take shots at the ghosts. Bullets hit everything but the ghosts, sending sparks off the ceiling, walls, and floors. A huge mirror is cut into a million pieces.

INT. DON'S OFFICE - CONTINUOUS

Jones and Esmerelda untie his mother.

JONES
C'mon mom. Let's go.

BURROUGHS
(to Jones)
Take the security tape, Jones. It could be evidence.

JONES
Right.

Jones pops the tape out of the VCR. Burroughs flies ahead of Jones, as he exits with mom and Esmerelda.

EXT. CASINO - CONTINUOUS

Esmerelda's taxi peels out fast.

EXT. JUDGE'S MANSION - EVENING

The judge pulls his expensive car up to the house.

He exits his car with his briefcase and coat.

Esmerelda's taxi screeches to a stop.

The judge runs inside his house.

Jones gets out of Esmerelda's car and puts a package on the front steps.

INT. JUDGE'S MANSION - CONTINUOUS

The judge enters his bedroom and pulls a gun out of a drawer. Burroughs is sitting on his bed.

BURROUGHS
Evening, judge.

He jumps.

JUDGE
What?! Who are you?

BURROUGHS
I am someone you don't want to mess with, your honor.

Burroughs floats in the air, making himself larger.

BURROUGHS

I was killed by Don Vinscence,
along with many other people. You
will find it all on the video tape
on your front porch. I suggest you
watch it, and make the right
decision. Or else, I will haunt
you until the end of your days.

Burroughs flies over the judge's head, and out through the
window.

EXT. JUDGE'S MANSION - CONTINUOUS

The judge opens his front door. He grabs the package, and
looks around. Everyone is gone.

INT. JUDGE'S MANSION - CONTINUOUS

The judge pops the video tape into the VCR. He watches the
security tape intently as it shows Don shooting a man in the
alley.

JUDGE

Don Vinscence, well I'll be.

EXT. COURTHOUSE- - DAY

Lawyers and others file into the building.

INT. JUDGE'S CHAMBERS - CONTINUOUS

Tiny and Joey knock on the door.

JUDGE

Enter.

Tiny and Joey enter.

TINY

Hello, your honor.

JUDGE

Who are you? What do you want?

TINY

I just brought you a little gift,
on behalf of Don Vinscence.

Tiny puts a thick envelope, bulging with money on the desk.

JUDGE

I can't accept this.

TINY

Relax, it's a gift.

JUDGE

Take it out of here.

JOEY

I don't think you understand, judge. You're going to take that envelope, and your going to throw this case out of court, you understand? Or you'll be next.

Joey pulls out a gun, and waves it in the judge's face.

JUDGE

Alright. Whatever you want. Just don't shoot.

INT. COURTROOM - CONTINUOUS

Tiny and Joey enter and sit down. Jones and Esmerelda are in the crowd. Esmerelda cringes when she sees Don.

ESMERELDA

It's him again.

JONES

Relax, they are going to get what's coming to them.

ESMERELDA

I hate to see Don Vinscence again.

JONES

Yes, me too.

Don and his lawyer confer at the front of the court. The judge enters.

BAILIFF

All rise.

JUDGE

Be seated. I'll make this short and sweet. It has come to my attention that certain details have been left out of the Vinscence case. There is no strong evidence of tax evasion. I don't think we can proceed.

PROSECUTOR

But, your Honor, there is also clear evidence of foul play here.

JUDGE

I have my reasons, councilor.

PROSECUTOR

Well, perhaps you can share them
with this court?

Burroughs appears near the floor at the judge's desk.

BURROUGHS

Remember what I told you, or I'll
haunt you for the rest of your
days.

JUDGE

Ah!

BURROUGHS

You will never have a moment's
peace.

JUDGE

(gulps)

Well, perhaps I was being too
hasty.

(to the
prosecutor)

What do you have to say?

PROSECUTOR

There are allegations of murder at
the casino. There is evidence of
wrongdoing that hasn't been
discovered, possibly bodies being
kept at the site. Your honor,
may we proceed?

Burroughs appears at the back of the court room, visible to
the judge.

JUDGE

Alright. I order the casino to be
searched. By whatever means
necessary. Tear it up.

He bangs his gavel down, causing a stir in the crowd.
Burroughs smiles, and disappears. The judge collapses with
relief.

DON VINCENCE

(to lawyer)

Stop him.

DON'S LAWYER

(to judge)

You can't do that!

JUDGE

I can, and I did. Take the

prisoner away on suspicion of
murder. No bail.

(points to Tiny and
Joey)

And them too - contempt of court
and attempting to bribe a judge.

He bangs the gavel again. The bailiffs haul Don, Tiny and
Joey away.

EXT. CASINO - DAY

Construction crews dig under the casino while cops watch.

FRANK MILLS

(into TV camera)

This is Frank Mills live on the
scene at the Stardust Casino,
where a court order is resulting
in the excavation of the site in
a search for clues to murders
allegedly committed by Don
Vinscence and his cohorts. Wait,
I think we've found something.

COP

Hold it!

The cops bends down by the foundation and pulls out a human
skull. He holds it up for the TV camera to see.

COP

Looks like there's a few skeletons
in here.

He brushes the dirt to reveal more skulls and bones that are
visible.

FRANK MILLS

This is definitely going to hurt
Vinscence's changes in the Mayoral
race.

INT. CAFE - DAY

SUPER: "A COUPLE OF WEEKS LATER"

Jones, Esmerelda and Freddie sit, having coffee.

MADAME DE MANUEL

Jones, aren't you excited?!

JONES

Excited? Why?

MADAME DE MANUEL

Why, your book!

She hands him a newspaper.

INSERT: A picture of Jones, and the headline "DON'S BIOGRAPHY
A HIT. JONES MODELL HOT NEW WRITER."

JONES
Son-of-a-bitch! It got published
after all. And they love it.

ESMERELDA
Let me see. Wow!

JONES
Too bad it's not my best work.

ESMERELDA
Are you kidding? It's a best-
seller. Everyone wants to read
about Don Vinscence now!

INSERT another headline: "MOB BOSS JAILED FOR MULTIPLE
MURDERS, TAX EVASION".

JONES
(reading)
"Mob boss Donald "Don" Vinscence
was sentenced to eleven life
sentences for murder and multi-
million dollar tax evasion."
He'll never get out of jail.

ESMERELDA
Jones, I hope we are safe now.
Let's go away somewhere.

Jones and Esmerelda embrace. Freddie raises his glass.

FREDDIE
I'll drink to that.

EXT. AIRPORT - DAY

Planes move in and out.

JONES (O.S.)
Where should we go?

ESMERELDA (O.S.)
Somewhere with a race track.

JONES (O.S.)
Oh, I think the Monaco Grand Prix
is next week.

ESMERELDA (O.S.)
Perfect!

FREDDIE

As long as they have beer.

INSERT: on a plane as it takes off: "Monaco Air".

INT. JAIL CELL - DAY

Ghosts fly in and out of the jail cell, howling, tormenting Don.

DON VINSCENCE

(whimpering)

No. Leave me alone! Please!

ROBBER GHOST PAUL

(laughs)

We're gonna have fun with you.

In another cell, ghosts fly through to haunt Tiny.

TINY

(cries)

Help me. Please make it stop.

GHOSTS

(in unison)

Never. Never.

Joey puts his hands over his head in his cell.

JOEY

(sobbing)

Have mercy, have mercy.

EXT. CITY STREET - EVENING

Burroughs floats along, smiling. He look at a newspaper box.

INSERT: "DON SAYS 'I WAS FRAMED'".

BURROUGHS

Now the karma is even. I can't wait to get out of here.

Burroughs disappears in a puff of smoke. His cat, Fletch, runs up to the cloud.

BURROUGHS (O.S.)

Come on, Fletch.

The cat jumps up and disappears in a small puff of smoke.

ROLL CREDITS.

FADE OUT.