

**THE NEW YORKER**

"Pilot"

**ACT ONE**

**EXT. STREET - DAY (FLASHBACK)**

SELDEN "CREAMY" LARUE (70) sits impatiently on one of the rusty benches which line Saint Vartan Park on 36th and 2nd in Manhattan.

This is not the New York of endless possibilities, \$2,000/sq. foot apartments, or Derek Jeter's intangibles. It's the New York that's unforgiving and unrelenting, devoid of green grass and decent men.

Cream scatters bird seed. Pigeons eat, strut, and shit.

CREAM (V.O.)

If there's one thing that irritates me more than all the other things that irritate me, it's people who begin too many of their sentences with "I." I this, I that. There's too much of Me-Me-Me, I-I-I, so much so, that the only compelling response is "Sit down, shut up, then earn your sense of entitlement like the rest of us." It seems that, quite literally...I'm sick of this town.

**INT. INTERROGATION ROOM - DAY (FLASHBACK)**

Cream speaks to one of the 17th Precinct's FINEST.

CREAM

I was born here, I was raised here, and pretty soon, I'm going to die here. It's fitting, as the only thing that seems to thrive, flourish or bloom in this city is the utter selfishness and self-absorption of the populace at large.

**EXT. CHURCH STEPS - DAY**

BILLY PEACHES (20) considers the sleeping HOMELESS around him.

**EXT. THE FIVE BOROUGHS - DAY (FLASHBACK)**

Cream's speech, complemented by a colorful/provocative MONTAGE.

CREAM (V.O.)

I'm tired of you Protect and Serve hypocrites falsifying evidence and firing indiscriminately at the poor, and I'm tired of the poor falsifying welfare and firing indiscriminately at each other.

(MORE)

CREAM (V.O.) (cont'd)

Don't even get me started on the demon spawn of New Canaan and Jericho, Rumson and Rye: The nouveau riche spilling forth from Metro North and Metro Transit and the Long Island Railroad, flooding our streets with their upper-middle class privilege and misplaced ambition. And my, what Godforsaken streets they are: Our cup runneth over with piss, spit, shit, and Freon, not to mention the gridlock and potholes, chicken bones and cigarette butts, Save the Rainforest and Save the Children and Save the Whales and Fuck Darfur. To hell with Darfur. Those fickle, college piss slits had me losing sleep over Tibet, but then they decided to trade in that cause for a newer model. "Cream, pay no mind to that Chinese fella, there's rape and genocide and little black babies in Darfur that need your help." Fact is, too many white, black, and Chinese babies need our help here in this country, and while it is sad, I have neither the tears nor temperament to concern myself with whether people are living or dying in Africa. Again, this shit city itself is overflowing with just that: Shit. Rat shit, roach shit, and human feces, plus the pigeon and dog shit that got me in this here shit with you right now... It's horseshit.

FINEST

Well, I feel the same way. Mainly what you said about, you know, not caring if Darfur moolies live or die in Africa.

CREAM

Sure. But that's more about you being a hateful, heartless pig than anything else. You see, Jesus Christ and the rest of us are still trying to figure out whether we care about cops living or dying. I won't speak for Christ, but I myself am leaning towards "not."

**EXT. CHURCH STEPS - DAY**

Billy Peaches checks his watch. Then, he ascends the steps, zig-zagging past the sleeping homeless.

**INT. CARLUCCI'S ROOM - DAY**

Shirtless and sexy post-coitus, JULIAN CARLUCCI (19) lays on his side as he holds a phone to his ear. As it rings, he traces a line along the curves and angles of a GIRL'S back.

HOSTESS (O.S.)

Minetta Tavern -- Melissa speaking.

CARLUCCI

Oh. Nice to meet you, Melissa. I guess that saves me the trouble of getting all passive-aggressive at the end of the call with the whole, "And-Who-Am-I-Speaking-With?"

HOSTESS

I hate that.

CARLUCCI

It's the worst. So, basically, my girlfriend and I nabbed a reservation later and I actually plan to propose. Thing is, we're quite young-looking, so I'm guessing we'll be assigned a less-than-desirable table.

HOSTESS

Oh, no. Minetta does not discriminate based on physical appearance.

CARLUCCI

Right. See...I was hoping that you do.

He hangs up. A moment, until an arm appears from behind his back.

There's a SECOND GIRL in Carlucci's bed, obscured by his body.

Carlucci collapses onto his back. Second Girl, in turn, hugs him.

**INT. CHURCH - DAY**

Back with Billy, who kneels in the pew. Prays to an awesome God.

**INT. SOFIA'S ROOM - DAY**

SOFIA BENITEZ (17) works in a cramped, messy, rat's nest of a bedroom. She studies big box televisions of varying size. There are several of them, each of which are tuned to baseball games.

A moment, until something catches her eye re: Seattle vs. Texas.

**INT. YVES SAINT LAURENT - DAY**

The most unassuming girl on Manhattan Isle -- or so she would have us believe -- STEPHANIE "MARKO" MARKOVICH (21) appears out of her element as she hunts and gathers at the YSL flagship. An prim and proper English MANAGER presents.

MANAGER

How do you do? May I be of assistance?

MARKO

Actually, yeah -- thank you so much. Um, I wanted to buy a business suit, but my mom has to see me in it. The "no returns" policy is pretty clear, but I read that sometimes you bend it for important people... I'm obviously not important, but I promise not to wear it just once for an interview or date or anything, because aside from the fact that it'll be a freezing-cold-day-in-hell before I ever land another date or interview, if I return it, I'll return it today.

Marko's planned bumbling hits its mark. Manager stops a RUNNER.

MANAGER

This one needs a suit. Loan her what she needs, not wants. 34-26-36.

Runner nods, leaves.

MARKO

Um, I have a twenty-five inch waist.

Manager, perfect posture and pedigree, holds on Marko forever.

MARKO

I have a twenty-six inch waist?

Manager closes her eyes, nods discreetly. Then...

MANAGER

I service any number of thorny and demanding women on this floor. But I noticed from across the room that there was something...different about you.

(beat)

Your honesty is entirely refreshing.

**INT. CONFSSIONAL BOX - DAY**

Billy signs the cross. He begins manipulating a paper clip.

PRIEST

In Nomine Patris et Filii et...

BILLY

Forgive and bless me Father, for I have sinned. I confess to Almighty God, and to you Father, that I have sinned exceedingly in thought, word, deed, and omission through my fault.

(beat)

It's been one week since my last confession. I accuse myself of having committed during that time, the following sins: I lie, I cheat, and I also steal. But it's the guilt that's gonna nail me to that cross.

**EXT. STREET - DAY**

Back with Cream on his bench. He eyes a dog OWNER. Earlier in the interrogation room, he spoke of "the pigeon and dog shit that got me in this here shit with you right now." That moment has arrived.

We again see Cream scatter bird seed. Pigeons eat, strut, and shit.

Seeing the pigeons, a dog pulls on its leash. Its Owner is annoyed.

Then, the dog poops. Once finished, Owner doesn't pick up the mess.

Next, the dog darts towards the pigeons, who fly off in a storm. As a result, Owner faceplants. Cream and the dog exchange looks.

Livid, Owner stands, then directs her rage towards Cream.

DOG OWNER

What the hell is your problem?

CREAM

Problem? Forgive me if I'm speaking out of turn, Miss, but I don't think that I'm the one with the problem.

DOG OWNER

Oh, fuck off... What's with old people and pigeons, anyway? Are you that lonely and desperate for companionship?

CREAM

Sometimes. Though, if things ever got too lonely or too desperate, I would just...I dunno...maybe get a dog?

DOG OWNER

For your information, it's not even my dog. I'm a cat person.

CREAM

Good. I see several of them in your future. And for your information, the reason I feed the pigeons is because this way, they build their nests here in Murray Hill, instead of the more prestigious Sutton Place to the North or Gramercy to the South. See...a bunch of us old people decided that if you're foolish enough to live by the Midtown Tunnel -- if you're foolish enough to make your home in the tailpipe of a Cadillac -- well, you probably deserve to get shit on for the duration of your lease.

Owner, dumbfounded.

DOG OWNER

I'm gonna choose to ignore you. I know that your wife died the way she died. And everyone knows you're a bitter old man because of it.

She moves on. Cream stands, ambles over to the pile of dog poop.

Gazes at it, offering it its due consideration, then walks away.

He doubles back, regards it once again, then looks at Owner. Her back is turned. Cream picks up the wet poop with his bare hand, grimaces, then heaves it like Grant Hill to Christian Laettner.

Owner nonchalantly turns to face us/Cream, and just as the poop is about to land square on her forehead --

**INT. JEWELRY STORE - DAY**

Through a jeweler's loupe, we see a sparkling, flawless diamond.

SCOOTER

Wait, what's it called? Moissanite?

JEWELER

Moissanite. Silicon Carbide, genius.

SCOOTER

Oh, Silicon Carbide. Of course. What could I have possibly been thinking?

SCOOTER HAWKINS (18) returns the loupe to a JEWELER friend.

SCOOTER

Let's say it were a diamond. What kinda "color" would we be looking at?

JEWELER

Color, I'm telling you: If you get the GIA Board o' Gobs in here with a 10x loupe, they'll tell you flat-out it's colorless or nearly colorless. Clarity's where you run into trouble.

SCOOTER

Gotcha. I was scared the inclusions would affect the transparency.

JEWELER

No woman can ever distinguish between Moissanite and a diamond. Elizabeth Taylor couldn't. If you and I cannot, if Liz Taylor in huh prime could not, no other woman can.

SCOOTER

So how much for this one?

JEWELER

For you, Scooter? Two hundred dollars.

SCOOTER

How about some schmuck off the street?

JEWELER

Two hundred dollars.

SCOOTER

Seriously?

JEWELER

Fake, but I don't sell shit-rocks.

SCOOTER

... Two hundred dollars.

JEWELER

Two hundred dollars.

Scooter thinks it over.

SCOOTER

I need fifty. Just like this one.

**INT. SOFIA'S ROOM - DAY**

Back with Sofia, the girl who was breaking down baseball video. She rewinds the Ranger pitcher mid-windup, over and over again.



**INT. CHURCH - DAY**

Finished with Confession, Billy heads for the doorway.

He produces the paper clip we saw him manipulating earlier.

Billy reaches a donation box which is along the back wall, then takes a moment to pick the lock with the paper clip.

He opens the box and takes the cash, then leaves.

**EXT. CHURCH - DAY**

Billy descends the stairs. He stops to slip several bills under the cardboard beds of each member of the sleeping Homeless.

Upon reaching the bottom, he puts what remains into an envelope.

Then, after considering, Billy doubles back and enters the church.

**INT. CHURCH - DAY**

Billy returns the money via the slot. As he's about to once again leave, he hears wood creak. Closes his eyes. Feels he's been seen.

PRIEST

I know that you've been visiting  
various churches all over the city.

Billy turns around. Sees a PRIEST (50).

PRIEST

That's what you do. It's your M.O.  
(beat)

Jim Cooper speaks highly of you. Says  
you don't like to go more than a week  
without confession. I do respect that  
Trinity and Grace have storied  
histories which we can't compete with.  
Still, I hope you plan on visiting us  
again.

Billy looks at the donation box, then at Priest.

BILLY

I've been planning it for weeks.

**END OF ACT ONE**

**ACT TWO****INT. HOTEL LOBBY - DAY**

In her YSL suit, Marko walks across polished marble.

**EXT. STREET - DAY**

Billy walks the street unsuspected and unmolested, an anonymous young everyman in a sea of HUNDREDS.

**INT. RESTAURANT - DAY**

Marko eats with two SUITS. Her plate's full: Filet mignon, veggies, potatoes. By contrast, theirs are sparse: French, demure, measured.

MARKO

James knows; I grew up in baseball hotbeds: Georgia, Northern Florida, Texas... And Sofia's dad is a JUCO coaching legend... I used to play in 9th grade, but I think like a lot of girls, you start to worry that athletic prowess will compromise your femininity in the eyes of boys.

SUIT 2

(eyeing a game/TV)

No pop, bad knees... Castillo's done.

MARKO

You're a scout, Tim. Judge Not Lest Ye.

SUIT 2

I'm an advanced scout. Know your role.

MARKO

Oh, you're an "advanced" scout.

SUIT 2

For the New York Yankees. And half the guys in here would trade their job for mine in a New York Minute.

MARKO

Maybe. But I'm gonna stick to my guns on this one. No grown man should have the word "scout" in his job title. "Advanced" scout just makes it sound like the hapless, middle-child way station between "Cub" and "Eagle."

SUIT 1

Marko...where is this coming from?

MARKO

I heard from someone who heard from someone who heard from someone, that someone in the front office was talking about Sofia's body.

SUIT 1

Who said that?

MARKO

No one.

**INT. SOFIA'S ROOM - DAY**

Sofia was last seen rewinding and replaying a pitcher's windup.

MARKO (V.O.)

The value we place on Sport pre-dates human civilization, cuz it's the only universal measure of human achievement.

Stacks of VHS tapes, all over Sofia's room. Players names on them.

Her TVs are no longer tuned to live games. They are all paused on old telecasts of this one pitcher, frozen mid-windup. She studies.

Sofia opens a drawer: Tons of cell phones. She grabs one, dials.

**INT. RESTAURANT - DAY**

Marko's phone VIBRATES. In the middle of her last sentence, she answers/puts the phone to her ear. But it's not Sofia calling.

**INTERCUT WITH:**

**EXT. STREET - DAY**

Scooter walks and talks.

MARKO

Sport is objective. It's based in science and nature and absolutes. It qualifies, it quantifies. Castillo's taxes alone, they pay the salary of every rookie cop and fireman on the street. Plus, he pretty much sweeps our streets and plows our snow and provides sustainable drinking water for your children.

SCOOTER (O.S.)

Marko?

Marko holds on the Suits.

MARKO  
 Sorry, I can't talk right now.  
 (beat)  
 I'm eating my lunch.

**INT. SOFIA'S ROOM - DAY**

Now it's Sofia, on one of the phones she grabbed.

**INTERCUT WITH:**

**INT. BATTING CAGE - DAY**

HITTER cradles a phone. An *Iron Mike* deals heat. Pitches zoom by.

SOFIA  
 Do you know what your numbers looked  
 like against Chris Archer last year?

HITTER  
 I was like, 4 for 17 with two knocks.

SOFIA  
 It was a rhetorical question.  
 (beat)  
 How did you even know that?

HITTER  
 I mean, I'm the one who did it. So...

SOFIA  
 Listen. Archer's tipping his pitches.  
 When he throws his cut fastball, I  
 found a tell. Do you have a minute?

**EXT. STREET - DAY**

Finished with confession, Billy walks near the Midtown Tunnel.  
 He reads a photocopied page from *The New York Times*. The date:  
 1/5/06. "Hidden Cost of Shark Fin Soup: Its Source May Vanish."

He looks across the street. A TUNNEL COP carries a tray of  
 coffee to the checkpoint. The cop is 50 feet from our man --

**EXT. STREET - DAY**

-- Cream, who left us hanging on a cliff:

A healthy mass of poop lands smack-dab on Owner's forehead.

She SCREAMS. Tunnel Cop notices.

TUNNEL COP

Are you crazy? What's your problem?

CREAM

I know you're fresh on the case here, Officer, but at the risk of sounding like a broken record, well...I don't think I'm the one with the problem.

Owner begins to cry. A SECOND COP from the checkpoint heads up the incline and towards the scene.

TUNNEL COP

Turn around. Hands behind your back.

CREAM

You're kidding me; we've only just met. At least buy me dinner first.

TUNNEL COP

Turn. Around.

CREAM

Son...when you were a baby in your mother getting born, I was a Marine in Vietnam getting killed.

(leaning in)

I'm an Officer, Lieutenant. When you address an Officer, show some respect.

Cream delivers an open-palmed SMACK to Tunnel Cop's ear.

Given the dog shit now on his ear, Tunnel Cop jabs Cream in the stomach. Cream gasps, doubles over, then strikes back with force.

Tunnel RADIOS for backup, drops Cream down. Digs in a knee.

Billy rushes into the fold. He attempts to separate the parties.

Second Cop sees the melee, abandons his comforting of Owner, then also hurries to the scene. He tackles Billy. The four men brawl.

Sirens BLARE on a black Impala. NYPD undercovers arrive to help.

Out step two DETECTIVES in suits. They casually approach. Tunnel and Second Cop, relieved. They place cuffs on Cream and Billy.

Tunnel and Second Cop guide Cream and Billy to their feet, hand them off to Detectives, who place them in the back of their car.

**INT. CARLUCCI'S ROOM - DAY**

With the Girls now gone, Carlucci's on his cell. **INTERCUT WITH:.**

**INT. SOFIA'S ROOM - DAY**

Sofia's phone RINGS. She takes a break from her baseball watching.

SOFIA

Hey, what are you doing?

CARLUCCI

Nothing. You want to get dinner?

SOFIA

I'm starving, and you're paying. Where?

CARLUCCI

Minetta Tavern.

SOFIA

You need a reservation and they don't give them out willy-nilly.

(beat)

You already have a reservation. How?

CARLUCCI

Like, two or three mirrors and a whole lot of smoke... But no. No reservation.

SOFIA

Okay, cool.

CARLUCCI

Bye.

Sofia hangs up, gets her things together, then leaves the room.

As she opens her door and exits, she's met with a mirror image of Carlucci opening his door and exiting, as their doors are opposite one another. While their rooms are vastly different in style/size, they're not separate apartments as we were led to believe. Rather, they're adjacent bedrooms which are part of a large (unseen) space.

SOFIA

You look nice.

CARLUCCI

I'm just trying to keep up.

**INT. RESTAURANT - DAY**

Marko finishes with the Suits. She pays. Tips \$110 on a \$90 bill.

MARKO

Let's do this. Brass tacks.

SUIT 1

Marko, we can't give you 25 thousand.

MARKO

You can and you will.

SUIT 1

We can... We won't.

MARKO

And we can't spend the best years of our lives watching baseball. Pitchers tip and telegraph their pitches, sure. Sofia notices a twitch, I notice a tic. And that info gets us \$500 here, \$500 there, without breaking any laws. But like, we're not getting any younger.

SUIT 1

... You're 21 years old.

MARKO

And Sofia's 17. Tomorrow she'll be 24, next month she'll be 32, and in a year she'll be 48. Only to find that all the decent men her age are dating...

SUIT 2

Seventeen-year-olds.

MARKO

Advanced scout, indeed... Look, if Miami wants give Sofia and me 50 grand to hire us exclusively, we're asking you to pay us 25 to turn it down. It takes way too much time to study these guys, it's not fun for us anymore, and we wanna move on... Pay us not to work.

SUIT 1

A'right. I'm switching from friend to foe here, Marko. Now, you are a bright girl with a brilliant future once you grow out of this Spy vs. Spy phase. But 25K for you and Sofia not to work is not happening. Not now, not ever.

MARKO

Seriously? We're not talking about widgets, we're talking big business. You're the President of the New York Yankees. If you can pay 19-year-old Cuban defectors fifty million for their ability to hit a rock with a stick...you can dip into petty cash and pay Sofia and me 25K... Otherwise? We're gonna take our talents to South Beach.

**INT. IMPALA - DAY**

Billy, Cream, and Detectives drive down 2nd Avenue.

CREAM

I'm sorry for this. But thanks.

BILLY

I know you. From Catholic Charities.

(beat)

Can I get a little help here, Tommy?

Detective 2 unhooks something from his belt, then blindly tosses it to the back. It hits Billy in the chest, falls to his lap.

It's a ring of keys. Billy contorts so they fall to his side.

He further contorts so he can grab them with his cuffed hands.

Cream is confused as Billy unlocks his handcuffs. Cream presents, then is released as well.

**INT. HOTEL/EXT. STREET - DAY**

Marko traverses the lobby, exits the hotel, then smiles.

She produces a check with a Yankees logo. It's for \$25,000.

Marko resumes walking, and after a moment, reaches behind her neck for the price tag which is still attached to her suit.

The tag reads \$600. Marko rips it off and tosses it aside, where it flutters end-over-end to the street below.

**EXT. STREET - DAY**

Carlucci and Sofia make their way to Minetta Tavern.

**INT. 17TH PRECINCT - DAY**

Billy, Cream, and Detectives enter the station for processing.

Detectives escort Cream to a DESK JOCKEY for booking.

Billy casually walks down the hall and into a room.

**INT. PRECINCT VIEWING ROOM - DAY**

Several OFFICERS mill about, reading the paper, checking their phones. A large flatscreen is turned off. Billy grabs a remote, sits down, then turns on the TV. He stares at a blue screen.



**EXT./INT. MINETTA TAVERN - DAY**

Carlucci and Sofia enter Minetta. They approach the HOSTESS.

CARLUCCI

Hi. Um, I called maybe a half-hour ago? I think we got disconnected.

SOFIA

(to Carlucci)

I'm gonna wash up in the powder room.

HOSTESS

(beat)

The young-looking one who's gonna propose, right? She's so beautiful.

CARLUCCI

Oh. Thanks.

Carlucci, valuing Sofia for more than her appearance.

CARLUCCI

I made her myself.

**INT. INTERROGATION ROOM - DAY**

Cream speaks with "Finest" from the 17th Pct, as previously seen.

CREAM

-- plus the pigeon and dog shit that got me in this here shit with you right now... It's horseshit.

**INT. VIEWING ROOM - DAY**

Officers erupt in laughter, as they and Billy watch Cream.

FINEST

I feel the same damn way. Mainly what you said about, you know, not caring if Darfur moolies live or die in Africa.

Officers gathered upon hearing the news about an old man who assaulted two "uniforms." Of course, this isn't a Latin King wreaking havoc, it's an old man who lost it. Somewhat charming.

They egg Cream on via the big screen. Billy, however, hangs on Cream's every word. He's intrigued and focused. No laughs at all.

CREAM

-- want to speak for Christ, but I myself am leaning towards 'not.'

Again, the Officers erupt.

OFFICER 1  
I love it. This guy's a cowboy.

OFFICER 2  
Billy, how do you know him again?

He turns around, but Billy's gone.

**INT. 17TH PRECINCT - DAY**

Cream's file. Billy analyzes his writing. Detective 1 watches.

DETECTIVE 1  
So, you're gonna recruit a crotchety old man because he doesn't cross his "I's" and dot his "T's"?

BILLY  
You know Stanford-Binet? The IQ tests? Alfred Binet cut his teeth performing handwriting analysis on little kids, then used it to predict their future behavior with like, amazing accuracy. Then he found that he could use it to predict future behavior from any age.

DETECTIVE 1  
You don't need to be living this life, Billy. Why don't you join the Academy?

BILLY  
I don't like guns. Or white people.

Billy's white, Detective 1 is black, so the joke draws a glare.

**INT. MINETTA TAVERN - DAY**

Carlucci and Sofia dine at one of Minetta's prime tables.

CARLUCCI  
Are we ready for tonight?

SOFIA  
We are. I set up The Mark.

**INT. SHAM APARTMENT (FLASHBACK) - NIGHT**

Sofia and THE MARK (50) in a high-end apartment. Giving him a tour, she brings him to a pitch black room.

A moment. Then, all we see are red lasers. Sofia turns on the lights, revealing framed art.

THE MARK

Wow. What does your friend do?

SOFIA

David? He works for his parents. He's young, but they're experienced. They buy and sell stolen art. I'm guessing that the stuff here is not stolen, or it wouldn't be on display. But yeah: David's parents will buy a 20 million dollar stolen painting for one million, then sell it for five.

**INT. MINETTA TAVERN - DAY**

Back with Sofia and Carlucci at the table.

CARLUCCI

I noticed you said "powder room" back there instead of "bathroom."

SOFIA

You like that, right? Straight out of a Jane Austen novel. When not fielding correspondence from gentlemen callers, I can most often be found taking tea with George Knightley in the parlor.

(beat)

So we have this place going forward?

CARLUCCI

Let's not count our chickens. Only if we tip her well, and she feels bad for me.

Sofia retrieves her handbag. Slides \$300 across the table. After Carlucci pockets the cash, the pair lock eyes in a staring contest of sorts. A beat, until a tear wells up in the corner of Sofia's eye. Carlucci wells up, too, as they're both crying on cue.

As Hostess walks by, Carlucci produces Scooter's Moissanite ring.

CARLUCCI

Scooter did well, right?

SOFIA

Scooter always does well.

CARLUCCI

How's the coast?

SOFIA

It's clear.

Carlucci places his face on the table. Sofia casually flings her wine glass over his lowered head. It travels end-over-end until it shatters on the wall behind him. Startled DINERS turn to look.

Sofia gets up in a mock huff and hurries out of the restaurant.

A moment. Carlucci raises his head, face full of crocodile tears.

After a bit, he accepts his "fate," then heads for the door.

He stops by the Hostess. Sets three hundreds on the table.

HOSTESS

Are you okay?

CARLUCCI

I don't know. I'm kind of in shock.

(beat)

Ask me again when I see you tomorrow.

**INT. 17TH PRECINCT - DAY**

Billy sits by the door, awaiting Cream. The latter approaches.

CREAM

I'm Selden. My friends call me Cream.

BILLY

Billy Peaches.

(beat)

My friends call me Billy.

**EXT. STREET - DAY**

Billy and Cream walk.

CREAM

They said nothing will happen to me.  
That I'm in the clear. Is that true?

Billy nods at Cream's hand. Cream eyes his fingers: Ink-stained.

BILLY

They got what they want from you.

(beat)

Now it's my turn.

**INT. RESTAURANT - DAY**

Cream, about to begin eating. He waits on Billy, who prays.

BILLY

I'm not a Jesus Freak or anything. I  
just have a relationship with Christ.

(MORE)

BILLY (cont'd)

(beat)

I hope I don't make you uncomfortable.

CREAM

I have a relationship with Christ as well. It's just not a good one.

(beat)

Handcuffs make me uncomfortable.

BILLY

How would you rate your experience?

CREAM

I still can't get over the desk with the built-in handcuffs.

BILLY

Totally. I mean, objectively speaking, those desks are fascinating to look at if you can remove yourself from the unfortunate reality of your person being chained to one.

Cream regards Billy with suspicion.

CREAM

Who are you?

Billy looks out the window and into the mess of Times Square.

**EXT. STREET - DAY**

The pair watch a FLIM-FLAMMER and his game of Three Card Monte.

FLIM-FLAMMER

Lookie Lookie Lookie, I'm a Bookie Bookie Bookie! Friends and Romans, I have three playing cards: Two black tens, and the lovely queen of hearts. I throw them out slow as honey, but if your eyes ain't fast, you won't take the money. I say Hey Diddle Diddle, your queen is in the middle!

CREAM

I asked you a question.

BILLY

Well, I told you my name is Billy Peaches, and that's all you're gonna get. I was born in Rockland County in 1999.

CREAM

No you weren't.

BILLY

Okay, I guess I wasn't.

CREAM

No one is born in 1999. My prostate was taken out in 1999.

BILLY

I grew up a ward of the state at The Children's Village up in Dobbs Ferry. I never bounced in-and-out of foster homes, no one ever hit me, and in no way am I scarred from the experience. I'm just struggling... I'm a striver.

(beat)

Check out the guy in green: He's the Dip. Pick-pocket. As the saying goes, "Even if you don't play ball, the Dip will make you pay for the pleasure of watching." Now, the girl is the Hook.

CREAM

She draws in the men.

BILLY

She draws in the women. The money is what draws in the men. Women for the most part are gonna avoid a bunch of random hojos standing around a milk crate waving five dollar bills.

CREAM

So you're a street rat. You pull card hustles on tourists, and the cops look the other way cuz you give them a cut.

BILLY

Sometimes I do things and the men-in-blue get a cut, sometimes the men-in-blue do things and I get a cut... Go up and tap the Flim-Flammer's shoulder.

Cream makes his approach. Billy sends a text.

**INT. TAXI - DAY**

DIOP MOR, a Senegalese cabbie. Eyes his phone as it lights up.

**EXT. STREET - DAY**

A sheepish Cream, about to tap the Flim-Flammer's shoulder. But before he can, the Flammer slaps a wad of bills in Cream's palm.

Cream walks back to Billy just as cabbie Diop pulls up to them.

BILLY

What are you doing right now?

CREAM

I was actually gonna head over to  
Catholic Charities.

BILLY

I know; I always see you feeding the  
pigeons before you come by... Look:  
We didn't cross paths at the benches  
by chance. I wanted to introduce  
myself and talk to you a little.

(beat)

How about you go to Catholic Charities  
tomorrow? With me.

CREAM

Why?

Billy shakes hands with Diop, opens the taxi's back door.

BILLY

There are people I want you to meet.

**END OF ACT TWO**

**ACT THREE****INT. LOFT - DAY**

Home, Sofia and Carlucci use a band saw. Picture frames abound.

**INT. CHRISTIE'S - DAY**

At Christie's auction house, Marko and Scooter sit together.

MARKO

Why aren't we at Sotheby's?

SCOOTER

Because we're at Christie's.

An AUCTIONEER begins his SPIEL. Bidding starts at \$5,000.

Marko raises a paddle.

MARKO

I read that Sotheby's is auctioning off a 90 million dollar Picasso today.

SCOOTER

Do you know Picasso's full name?

Marko holds her paddle high.

MARKO

What is it?

SCOOTER

Ready? Pablo Diego José Francisco de Paula Juan Nepomuceno...María de los Remedios Cipriano de la Santísima Trinidad Ruiz...y Picasso.

(beat)

True story.

AUCTIONEER

Going once. Going twice. Sold to the Young Miss for twenty and four thousand dollars.

SCOOTER

... We should be at Sotheby's.

**EXT. STREET - DAY**

Carlucci has left Minetta Tavern. He sees Sofia. Upon closing the gap, they shake hands. Alpha male Carlucci, riding the high from playing Faux Couple and Jilted Lover, kisses Sofia.



After they separate:

CARLUCCI

Am I gonna end up being just another notch on your bed-post?

SOFIA

... Nothing more.

**INT. CAB - DAY**

Billy and Cream, driven downtown by Diop.

CREAM

You said you didn't show up at the benches by chance.

BILLY

Like I said, I've seen you at Catholic Charities. I need someone like you. And don't tell me that you're too old for this shit.

CREAM

Huh. I don't think I'm old enough.

(beat)

What makes you think I'd help you?

BILLY

From what I've seen, there's nothing to make me think that you wouldn't.

CREAM

I'm 70 years old. I don't wanna play cards in the cold.

BILLY

That's not what we do. That's just one revenue stream which flows into a big river, which will one day be an ocean.

(beat)

We hope. Look...you and I got tangled up in blue in the middle of the 17th Precinct. I have relationships there. Running a con in the 17th for me and my crew is like living in a steel, reinforced shark cage. With other precincts, we may as well be chum in the water. Not for nothing, but half the reason I took a beating for you was cuz when they inevitably radioed for backup, I knew the call would be answered by whichever two detectives were patrolling My Home Turf. My big brothers would be answering the call.

CREAM

I don't get it. I do, but...

BILLY

There are good cops and bad cops, right? We start with that assumption. Well, it stands to reason that not every good cop is all that good, and not every bad cop is all that bad.

CREAM

So you work with dirty cops?

BILLY

I'm 20 years old. I help them with low-level crime via chatter on the street. They look out for me cuz in ten years, they figure I'll have my hands in deeper pockets. Valuable pockets for me, valuable information for them. Until then, if we con some seemingly normal guy they let it slide, cuz they know the guy deserves it. You know why?

(beat)

Diop, tell him why.

DIOP

Because you can't con an honest man.

**INT. LOFT LIBRARY - DAY**

Sofia on the phone. Marko enters, sits.

**INTERCUT WITH:**

**INT. HOUSE - DAY**

Sofia's dad, TOM BENITEZ (50), in a dark, dreary room.

SOFIA

I spoke with Dr. Lake. He said you weren't taking the Atrovent.

TOM

It makes me dizzy. I get headaches.

SOFIA

Better than not being able to breathe though, right? You need to get on it and stay on it. Taking ownership of your sickness is a sign of strength.

TOM

I don't have any strength.

SOFIA

Daddy....

TOM

I have to go.

SOFIA

Okay. I love you.

TOM

Take care of yourself.

Sofia lingers, then hangs up.

MARKO

Do you wanna be alone?

SOFIA

Already am, baby girl. I already am.

**INT. SCOOTER'S ROOM - DAY**

Scooter and Carlucci stare with confusion at the painting Scooter and Marko purchased at Christie's.

It's a white canvas covered with hundreds of simple black dots.

CARLUCCI

Twenty-four thousand. What a find.

SCOOTER

It's sublime. Impediment and release.

Carlucci sees a cup full of pens on Scooter's desk. He picks out a black magic marker. Uncaps it. Considers it.

Carlucci casually tosses it at the canvas. It adds another dot.

**EXT. STREET - DAY**

Billy and Cream exit the cab. Billy shakes hands with Diop.

CREAM

You said something about how there's no reason I wouldn't help with this racket you've got going on. Explain.

BILLY

Right. Well, to answer that honestly, I have to admit why I volunteered at Catholic Charities in the first place.

**INTERCUT WITH:**

**INT. CATHOLIC CHARITIES - DAY**

A MONTAGE of Billy making his rounds. Smiling and palling around.

BILLY

I care about people, and I care about Christ, but I don't care about either nearly as much as I care about myself. To that end, volunteering at Catholic Charities is the perfect place for me. I get to serve my God, I get to serve his people, and as I said, it's kinda hideous, but I get to serve myself.

CREAM

You con them out of their money.

BILLY

No. They're completely innocent. It's more that...people coming to the end, they have short memories. Literally. And the grandkid who stopped visiting years ago often gets shafted in favor of the attentive orderly or nurse. Or in my case, Little Orphan Billy.

CREAM

Huh. So you what -- cased me?

BILLY

I mean...I'm not sure anyone's been "cased" since Nancy Drew and *The Password to Larkspur Lane*. But yeah.

They reach a run-down building. Billy produces keys.

CREAM

This is where you live?

**EXT./INT. BUILDING - DAY**

They enter. Billy presses an elevator button.

The intercutting with Billy at Catholic Charities continues.

BILLY

So, here's the thing: Your intake file said that you have no spouse and no next of kin. You have no emergency contact number, no visiting nurse, and no primary care physician. You also have no money.

CREAM

No shit.

BILLY

I installed a keystroke logger on each computer in the computer lab. Don't hit me, but I read your e-mails, which is how I know that you don't have any friends. Of course, that doesn't come as a surprise, given your sunny-disposition-don't-hit-me.

Cream bites a lip.

BILLY

I know you were a Marine in Vietnam, and I know you read up on Iraq vets being denied benefits. Our girl Sofia, her dad developed lung cancer after doing work at Ground Zero. He's been hurt by the lack of funding for the First Responder bill by the McConnell/Ryan/Grassley/Graham quartet, heretofore known as The Four Horsemen of the Apocalypse. Basically, Sofia's dad gave New York his heart, and in a show of good faith, New York stole his lungs. So, Sofia is angry at the world in the same way you are, and she needs money, the same way you do.

The elevator doors open. The pair step in.

CREAM

"Heretofore known as The Four Horsemen of the Apocalypse..." You don't really know what "heretofore" means, do you?

BILLY

I don't, but that's okay, too... It sounds very Old English and refined.

CREAM

It's Middle English. Continue.

BILLY

What my friends and I know we have in smarts, we know we lack in experience.

CREAM

Gravitas. I would lend you gravitas.

BILLY

You would. The fact that I was already coming to ask for your help, then saw you hit a cop, the fact that I saw you give a lot of lip under questioning...

CREAM

What's in it for me?

BILLY

Money. More than you'll ever need. And family. More than you'll ever want.

(beat)

Do you really wanna spend the rest of your life living in Section 8 housing?

CREAM

You shit. Who do you think you are?

BILLY

No one. I guess I'm just another human being who doesn't wanna spend the rest of his life in Section 8 housing.

CREAM

I'm sorry. I just...

BILLY

It's okay. You can't control the life you were born with. You can only work to improve it.

The elevator opens smack in the middle of a cavernous loft.

**INT. LOFT - DAY**

No fine furniture, no fancy trappings. But for a kid...

CREAM

Section 8's come a long way.

BILLY

This is more of a work/live-type deal. I got my own shit-box tenement studio.

CREAM

How much does this go for?

BILLY

15 grand a month. Split five ways.

Billy heads to a wall unit. Cream follows.

CREAM

Split five ways. There's five of you?

BILLY

Marko, Scooter, Carlucci, and Sofia.

CREAM

And where are they? Out stealing chocolate from a toddler?

BILLY

They're actually behind this wall unit right now, planning our next job. See that bust of Stalin? If you put your palm on JoJo's head for five seconds, the wall unit moves away and they'll all be sitting right there.

CREAM

Bullshit.

BILLY

HiddenPassageWay.com. Google it.

Cream places his palm on Josef Stalin's head for five seconds. As advertised, the unit shifts over, revealing stunned faces. After a moment:

CARLUCCI

I asked for a blonde and a redhead.

MARKO

You must be Mr. LaRue. I'm Marko.

CREAM

Call me Creamy. Or just "Cream."

MARKO

Oh. It's like...Peaches and Cream.

CREAM

Yeah. It's actually not.

MARKO

Well why do they call you "Cream"?

CREAM

Ask me again when you're 18.

MARGO

I'm 21.

CREAM

Ask me again when you're 40.

Everyone giggles.

CREAM

The rest of you are quiet. Bonnie, Clyde, Jesse or James, I presume?

SOFIA

I'm Sofia. I'm originally from Ohio.

CARLUCCI

Julian Carlucci. Echo Lake, Colorado.

SCOOTER

Scooter Allan Hawkins. Jasper, Texas.

CARLUCCI

And don't believe the hype. Scooter and I are the brains of this outfit.

CREAM

Yeah? How did you two meet, the gym?

Laughs all around. Billy and Cream sit.

MARKO

Billy tells us you're a baseball fan. We have a few contacts in that space.

CREAM

My wife? She was the biggest Dodgers fan there ever was. In fact, she was born about ten minutes before Mickey Owen dropped a 3rd strike that would have tied a Series against the Yankees. Her father, the bastard never forgave her for taking him away from the game in the hospital waiting room. He said Mickey never would've muffed that 3rd strike if not for her being born.

(beat)

Anyway. What do you got for me?

BILLY

Mr. LaRue needs money. I told you I would get him, I got him, and now that we have him, I haven't the slightest idea what to do with him.

MARKO

Social Security.

SCOOTER

Disability.

SOFIA

Medicare.

CARLUCCI

Medicaid.

CREAM

Even if they deserve it, I'm too old to be conning old people. It's too obvious. They'll see it coming.



SOFIA

Hot damn. The kid's a natural.

BILLY

(to Scooter)

Did you get the Moissanite?

Scooter produces a velvet pouch, then slides it over to Billy.

A ring bounces out and drops off the table. Into Cream's hand.

SCOOTER

Fifty of these ass-pellets ran us ten grand. But you have to spend money to make money, so some of these rings will get us soup, some will get us salad.

Scooter indicates the white canvas/black dot painting he and Carlucci defaced. It hangs from a wall. Cream crinkles his nose.

BILLY

It's a critique of China's industrial revolution. It's "Black Rain," by Guan Xuezhong... Guan Xuezhong is a genius.

CREAM

Says who?

CARLUCCI

Exactly. That dude is not a genius.

BILLY

We bought it for 24,000, and we'll sell it off, spinning it into a hundred grand.

CREAM

How?

Sofia points to a second painting.

SOFIA

That's Lt. General Barton Yount. He's been MIA since 1992, and is worth 1.2, 1.4 tops. Mainly because the signature in the corner says Norman Rockwell.

SCOOTER

It's a forgery. And a terrible one.

CREAM

You're going to sell a fake Rockwell for a hundred grand? Good luck.

Scooter smiles. Confused, Cream looks at Billy.

BILLY

We don't need luck. We have you.

And with that, 70-year-old Cream has been offered to align his star with that of 17-year-old Sofia, 18-year-old Scooter, 19-year-old Carlucci, 20-year-old Billy, and 21-year-old Marko.

**END OF ACT THREE**

**ACT FOUR****EXT. STREET - DAY**

The next morning. New Yorkers start anew. Let the River Run.

**INT. ROOM - DAY**

Sofia sleeps. A loud BANG, and she bolts upright. A smarmy PROFESSOR picks up the textbook he threw in order to wake her.

PROFESSOR

This is a classroom. At this moment, all across the Asian continent, your peers sleep as you do. However, in the coming hours, they will collectively rise. First in Russia, then in China, followed by India. Shortly thereafter, they will be in a classroom. And they will most decidedly not be sleeping. While you dabble in Creative Writing, Art History, and irony of all ironies, Asian Studies, they study Math, they study Physics, and That Is Goddamn All.

Sofia holds on Professor, who now addresses her directly.

PROFESSOR

Ms. Benítez: Forgive me if I've spoken out of turn. Are you by any chance a Math or Physics major? Minor, perhaps?

Sofia stands down.

PROFESSOR

Then what, pray tell, curiosity to end all curiosities, is your major?

SOFIA

Criminal Justice.

PROFESSOR

Criminal Justice. That's a novel field of study for a young woman... But tell us, as your classmates often ask of me: When will you ever use that?

SOFIA

... Never.

**INT. MINETTA TAVERN - DAY**

Pre-breakfast, the place is empty. Carlucci apologizes to Hostess.

CARLUCCI

I appreciate that you even accept my apology, Melissa. I know it reflects --

HOSTESSS

How do you know my name?

CARLUCCI

You told me. On the phone, remember?

HOSTESSS

But how would you remember?

CARLUCCI

Why wouldn't I? It's your name; it's important to you. If you told me your name, the least I could do is respect the gesture by remembering it.

HOSTESSS

Yeah, but you don't expect anyone to remember details about random people they'll never see again.

CARLUCCI

It's funny you say that. Remembering details about random people I'll never see again? That's...sort of my thing.

Hostess, intrigued.

**EXT. MOTT CORNER DELI - DAY**

At a cabbie hangout, Billy eats breakfast with Diop.

**EXT./INT. CHINATOWN RESTAURANT - DAY**

In Mandarin, signs on the window read, "Free Shark Fin Soup!" A photograph of a shark is on each sign.

Inside, Billy speaks with OWNER, who hands him a set of keys.

**EXT. FISH MARKET - DAY**

A DOCK WORKER and Carlucci. The Bronx waterfront in Hunts Point.

Carlucci trades the Moissanite rings for two crates of fish.

**INT. BAUMAN RARE BOOKS - DAY**

Scooter, in what looks like Teddy Roosevelt's trophy room.

DAVID BAUMAN (35), wearing handling gloves, places a baseball on a velvet swatch.

SCOOTER

How'd you get this in one day?

BAUMAN

I know a guy who knows a guy.

(beat)

Who knows a guy who knows a girl.

SCOOTER

Nice. Now, it says 1941 World Series. But is there any material difference between this ball...and the one used in the Mickey Owen game? Like, did they use one ball in Game 1, but different balls during the rest of the series?

BAUMAN

The Mickey Owen game? When he messed up the last out? Sure. This ball's worth maybe 500 dollars, and that one's baseball history. It's priceless.

SCOOTER

So, there's no difference?

BAUMAN

None. It's the same exact ball.

**EXT. BAYVIEW - DAY**

Marko's mom, NATASHA MARKOVICH (50), looks up from a book. All around her are INMATES enjoying their recreation hour. They're on the roof of the little-known Bayview Correctional. Bayview is a women's prison on 20th and 11th in Manhattan.

**INT. BAYVIEW - DAY**

In the visiting room, Ms. Markovich speaks with her daughter.

MS. MARKOVICH

You been going to church with Billy?

MARKO

I'm not religious.

MS. MARKOVICH

You're not a lot of things.

(beat)

Have you brought in any money lately?

(beat)

You're just like me, Marko.

MARKO  
I'm nothing like you.

MS. MARKOVICH  
You're exactly like me. The apple  
doesn't fall far from the tree.  
(beat)  
Say something. Unless you only came  
down here to pout.

Marko stands up and puts on her coat.

MARKO  
Mom...the apple may not fall far from  
the tree? But sometimes it rolls away.

**EXT. STREET - DAY**

Scooter arrives at Minetta Tavern. He forms a triangle of sorts  
with Carlucci and Billy, as they converge from different points.

CARLUCCI  
(to Scooter)  
Then there's this motherfucker right  
here.

Scooter produces the baseball he just bought, then flips it to  
Carlucci, who casually flips it to Billy. Billy examines it.

**EXT. MINETTA TAVERN - DAY**

The threesome peer into Minetta, hands cupped to glass.

They spy two men: The Mark and THE DEALER (50).

BILLY  
The guy on the left? That's The Mark.  
The other guy is his art dealer. He's  
gonna authenticate the, uh...

CARLUCCI  
Authenticity.

BILLY  
He'll authenticate the authenticity of  
*Black Rain* by Guan Xuezhong... I just  
like saying Guan Xuezhong like I know  
what the fuck I'm talking about.

The Mark turns, facing them. Billy and Carlucci drop to the  
street, butts on the ground. Scooter stays cupped to the window.

SCOOTER  
How did we find these clowns?

**INT. GALLERY (FLASHBACK) - DAY**

Sofia evaluates a painting with The Mark.

CARLUCCI (V.O.)

We did all our due diligence: Dude's a global player. His résumé reads like a greatest hits playlist of dicking over the common man: Fannie Mae, BoA, plus Galleon and Countrywide... He's a big spender on luxury goods, and a bigger B.S. artist than all of us combined.

THE MARK

I like Expressionism. And Fauvism.

Sofia, eyeing the fine, eligible bachelors in fine, Italian suits.

SOFIA

Yeah, I'm not into art. I'm just here for the ass... This place is like the New York Yacht Club without yachts.

**INT. SHAM APT (FLASHBACK) - NIGHT**

Again, Sofia and The Mark in the high-end apartment we saw earlier. Giving him a tour, she brings him to a pitch black room.

A moment, until we see the red lasers come to life, revealing art.

**INT. MINETTA TAVERN - DAY**

CARLUCCI

And here we are.

Billy and Carlucci now sit at a prime table with The Mark and The Dealer. The Dealer is about to examine *Black Rain*, which Carlucci has just presented him. The Mark looks on.

THE DEALER

It's a condemnation of the industrial revolution. It's called *Black Rain*, by Guan Xuezhong, a Chinese national. It sold at auction yesterday for fair market value... Xuezhong is a genius.

Billy eyes Carlucci, as this is what Carlucci questioned earlier.

THE MARK

What's fair market value?

BILLY

Twenty-four grand. We're offering it to you for four grand, Sir.

Hostess brings out a plate of appetizers. The Dealer reaches for one, but Carlucci, whose head is a bit down, pulls the plate towards himself, inadvertently denying The Dealer.

THE MARK

I'm just not interested in buying it.

THE DEALER

You don't have a choice.

THE MARK

... I'm confused.

THE DEALER

It's a buy-in. The way they insulate themselves from either of us turning them in is by having us buy a lesser work early on. It's called key money.

SCOOTER

Also, if this piece is worth 24 grand and we sell it to you for 4, it's a show of good faith for each party. You benefit, because if you decide not to buy anything tonight, you still go home with a steal. We benefit, cuz it sets you as a serious buyer. If you won't buy this, you won't buy that.

THE MARK

But how can you sell it for only 4?

BILLY

Cuz we expect to make far more money selling a far more valuable painting. We know about you. Your tastes.

THE MARK

Yes? What do you know about me?

CARLUCCI

You're a big deal in Saudi Arabia. We know you like Bengal tigers, Zuber wallpaper, Les Vues De L'Amérique Du Nord, specifically... You like linens from D.Porthault, untreated rubies...

BILLY

We know you're just as comfortable in jeans and a t-shirt as you are at a charity ball in a little black dress.

The Dealer laughs.



## THE MARK

I like a great many things... But I love America. I love your Coca-Cola, baseball, and apple pie. I love *The Saturday Evening Post* and Mr. Norman Rockwell... And I love that you are giving me a chance to meet him.

He takes out a stack of cash. \$100,000. Slides it to Billy.

**INT. CATHOLIC CHARITIES - DAY**

Billy and Cream sit at a table. VOLUNTEERS, ELDERLY mill about.

Fingers, flat on the table. They belong to MIA LINCOLN (20).

CREAM

I don't see anything wrong.

MIA

Billy?

BILLY

She's on dish duty. They replaced all the soap with eco-soap, and it's been eating away at her nails. The keratin.

MIA

My nails are breaking off like no one else's business. And worse: Mr. Dill?  
(beat)  
The son of a bitch keeps my clippings.

CREAM

Would you like me to beat him up?

MIA

Brains over brawn, Cream. Steal me his dentures and I'll wear 'em as a tiara. We know Honest Abe's not stealing 'em.  
(beat)

Short of that, I've been telling Billy about this designer nail hardener they sell at the salons. I'm broke, Billy's broke, and you're broke, but if you have any loan shark friends...

CREAM

Designer nail hardener. Duly noted.

Mia leaves.

CREAM

Honest Abe. And she thinks you're broke... You like her, huh?

BILLY

Is it that obvious?

CREAM

Not at all. I just figure you like her, because you look at her with the same level of affection you have when you look at me... So what's the plan?

BILLY

We present The Mark the fake Rockwell. Naturally, he wants his art dealer on board, so we said yes. That erases so much suspicion. Now, we'll still deny the dealer access, so you'll convince The Mark to buy via safety in numbers.

(beat)

No one wants to buy a high-end/stolen painting from a bunch of kids, but we met up with him. Only four more hours.

CREAM

... I'm really excited about this.

BILLY

Cool. Because I'm really, really scared.

**INT. HALLWAY - DAY**

Billy catches up with Mia in the hall.

BILLY

I don't know if you'll be downtown later, but if you're around, meet me on Mulberry and Hester at midnight.

MIA

What? Why?

BILLY

Just meet me on Mulberry and Hester.

MIA

(beat)

If you're not there by 12:01, I'm out. I'm not waiting around like last time.

**INT. LOFT - NIGHT**

Each of the kids get dolled up and pretty.

Cream, with an easel. In the corner of the canvas is a photo of his late wife. He paints her.

**EXT. PUCK BUILDING (ROOF) - NIGHT**

The calm before the storm. Cream and Scooter, with a rooftop view.

SCOOTER

So, when you met us yesterday, you asked everyone how we got involved in all this. We're all like...inclined this way. Fine. But Sofia is poor and has a sick dad. Marko's born into it, and her dad's not around. Carlucci's poor, and mom's not around.

CREAM

How come I didn't ask about you.

SCOOTER

Yeah. I don't think I've ever uttered the phrase, "Is it cuz I'm black," but like...were you assuming that I was born a crack baby, and I don't know who my dad is? Or that my mom died of AIDS?

CREAM

Oh, no. No. When we were going around the table, I would have asked, but I wasn't sure if you spoke English or not. I didn't have my glasses on, and thought you may have been Dominican.

Scooter laughs. They look at the city, in miniature.

CREAM

How did you all even meet?

SCOOTER

We're hustlers. We're strivers. Like attracts like... And for people like us, New York's like moths to a flame.

CREAM

And Billy?

SCOOTER

He's like Lex Luthor with great hair.

Cream smiles.

SCOOTER

We change names every couple weeks. Today you got Julian Carlucci. Few weeks ago, he's some-other-someone. Marko was Monica Wilson. But Billy will be Billy Peaches forever.

CREAM

Why's that?

SCOOTER

Around town, when we all started running together three years ago, people used to call us "Billy and the Peaches." Because we're all so young. Now, when people are talking about us, or wanna hire us for a job, it's been shortened to "Billy Peaches." So "Billy Peaches" is really just short for "Billy and the Peaches."

CREAM

But literally, how did you all meet?

SCOOTER

Where do five con artists meet?

CREAM

Law school.

Scooter smiles.

CREAM

Where do five con artists meet?

SCOOTER

... Church.

**INT. BALLROOM - NIGHT**

A large bowl of shark fin soup. It's unremarkable, and Cream regards it as such. Billy looks on while the hall is hopping.

CREAM

So how do you know he'll even buy it?

BILLY

Well, we've done this before and come up empty. We wasted 10K on a dead fish.

Cream eyes his soup.

CREAM

No pun intended.

BILLY

Before we met him at Minetta, we only told him it was a stolen Rockwell. We didn't say which one. We also agreed that his showing of the 100K would be a condition of the meeting.

CREAM

He showed up with 100 grand in cash?

BILLY

You walk out of Chase or Shitty-bank with a five-inch stack of hundreds, you are going to spend it. Even when your art dealer gets stopped at the door.

CREAM

... 100K is thicker than five inches.

BILLY

It's actually thinner. A single bill is .0043 inches, so a thousand hundreds is four-point-three inches.

CREAM

How do you know the thickness of a bill?

BILLY

I dunno; I just know. Probably cuz I don't sit around watching TV all day.

**EXT. PUCK BUILDING - NIGHT**

The Mark and The Dealer, in line for admittance to the party.

Suit-clad SECURITY pat down elderly Asians, collect phones.

Carlucci guards the back entrance. Sofia does the same at the service entrance. Scooter, on the roof, looks down at The Mark.

SCOOTER (phone)

He's up in five. We're out in ten.

**INT. ELEVATOR - NIGHT**

The Mark and The Dealer, on their way up to the ballroom.

**INT. BALLROOM - NIGHT**

Billy, alone. Sees the two men enter. Walks over, greets them.

THE MARK

Sorry we're late. Looks like your hands are full with this crowd.

BILLY

Don't worry about it. And yeah: A few insiders aren't happy that we offered you Guan Xuezhong. They wanted it, but to be honest, most of the people are only here for the shark fin soup.

THE DEALER

Oh, wow. I'd really like to try that.  
(beat)  
It's illegal, right?

BILLY

Highly illegal. We're basically  
throwing a theme party tonight.

**INT. VIEWING ROOM ENTRANCE - NIGHT**

Cream has joined The Mark/Dealer. Detective 1, posing as security, compares The Mark's license against a list. Cream turns to Dealer.

CREAM

I've never seen so many Chinese in one  
room... Am I allowed to call them that?

THE DEALER

I mean, they are Chinese. So...

Detective 1 addresses The Dealer.

DIC 1

I'm sorry, Sir. You're not on my list.

THE DEALER

I was on the list downstairs.

DIC 1

And that's why your upstairs. But  
it's also as far as you go. I'm sorry.

THE DEALER

They even took my phone away and they  
catalogued it. We were just with Dave.

THE MARK

I will not buy without him here. It's  
not an option. David will be --

DIC 1

Sir, David's father signs my checks.

He presses his ear.

DIC 1

I need an escort out of the building.

THE MARK

Please. Let's talk.

**INT. VIEWING ROOM - NIGHT**

Mark, Billy, Cream, 2 Dics. The Dealer is gone, so The Mark and Billy examine the Rockwell solo. Cream studies another painting.

BILLY

I can't apologize enough. I don't know why my parents have two lists.

THE MARK

How can I be certain it is worth what you say it is? It looks great, but there could be damage. Distress.

(beat)

I will only buy if I can send pictures.

BILLY

... That's fine. You can use my phone.

(to the Dics)

We good? Are you gonna tell my folks?

**EXT. STREET - NIGHT**

The Dealer views Billy's text. It's a picture of the Rockwell.

The Dealer dials Billy's number.

THE DEALER

David: Just got your text. Terrific Rockwell you have there. One question.

(beat)

How do you have the Barton Yount, when the missing Yount is a deal I brokered 15 years ago? By brokered, I mean that I bought it, stolen, 15 years ago.

(beat)

It's not in your interest to try and sell us a painting which we already own.

**END OF ACT FOUR**

**ACT FIVE****INT. VIEWING ROOM - NIGHT**

Billy listens to his voicemail. He can't acknowledge that, or The Mark would ask to call and consult with The Dealer. As such, Billy pretends to struggle with reception. He kills the signal with a "plug."

BILLY

I can't get a signal. Maybe out there.

Billy leaves. Cream tries to rope in The Mark.

THE MARK

This is bad. I don't know what to do.

CREAM

If you don't want it, I'll take it.

THE MARK

You're buying yours?

CREAM

Course. The kid and his family... What they're able to do, nothing else makes me happy anymore. I get zero happiness from owning...a rare car, for example. If they make six, all it means is that five jackasses in Libya have one. No offense. But with these... With these, there is only one.

THE MARK

Which painting are you buying? What do you have there?

Cream shows him the frame he holds: The painting of his wife.

THE MARK

It's beautiful. How much is it worth?

CREAM

... She's priceless.

**EXT. ROOF - NIGHT**

Scooter, still guarding the roof entrance, watches a fire truck stop in front of the building.

Marko, at the entrance, still handling the line, sees the same.



SCOOTER

You think The Dealer called them?

MARKO

I don't think he's that smart. Besides, it's the Puck Building. If there were a fire here, the cops would show up, too.

FIREFIGHTERS approach the entrance. On cue, The Dealer appears, then consults with them.

MARKO

Great. He's definitely using them to come upstairs.

They see two police cars approach.

SCOOTER

I have to go. I'm headed to jail.

MARKO

Hashtag -- Me, too.

**INT. VIEWING ROOM - NIGHT**

The Mark admires the Rockwell. Billy feeds his \$100,000 to a counting machine. Then, Billy presses a finger to his ear.

SCOOTER (O.S.)

This is really bad.

Billy turns to Cream and winks. It's a previously established signal for Cream to get out of Dodge. Cream exhales, leaves.

**INT. STAIRWELL A - NIGHT**

Scooter rushes down the stairs.

**INT. STAIRWELL B - NIGHT**

Firefighters, trailed by The Dealer, trudge up another stairwell.

**EXT. STREET - NIGHT**

Sofia, who was guarding the service entrance, walks quickly on the side of the building. Around the corner, Carlucci also walks quickly, and the two meet up perfectly at a building corner.

**INT. BALLROOM - NIGHT**

Billy and The Mark, surrounded by Asians. Billy's watch: 11:50.

The Mark, all smiles. The Rockwell is neatly wrapped up.

**INT. LOBBY - NIGHT**

Dics 1 and 2 exit the stairwell door. Marko is waiting for them. Now sandwiched between them, she exits safely.

**INT. BALLROOM - NIGHT**

Billy, The Mark, and Asians notice Firemen and Cops fanning out. Billy doesn't panic, as Firemen aren't moving with urgency.

Billy sees The Dealer at the entrance. The Dealer scans the crowd for The Mark. Billy slips away to the adjacent room.

The Mark and The Dealer make eye contact. The Dealer, concerned, shakes his head. The Mark realizes that the deal has gone bad.

He heads after Billy. The Dealer leaves the ballroom, cuts to the adjacent space. Through plate glass he sees Billy near the back of the space, now fumbling with a window.

Knowing The Mark will try to catch Billy from behind, The Dealer rushes to the stairwell to catch him from a lower floor.

Billy texts, then produces a glass cutter. Scores a large square.

He attaches suction cups and tries to pull the square out. No go.

Re-scores/pulls, re-scores/pulls, but with The Mark closing fast, he fucks all and throws a chair through the window. Cops perk up.

Billy climbs through. The Mark follows him. The Dealer appears on the fire escape, makes his way up. But as they close in, Diop arrives, driving to the rescue due to Billy's text.

Diop looks up, sees that The Mark and The Dealer will soon trap Billy, so he pulls up to an industrial trash bin by the curb.

He exhorts Billy to jump. Billy jumps, overshoots, lands on the hood of the cab. He ounces off and onto the street, losing the key he was given by the Chinatown restaurant Owner.

Diop helps him up. Though hurt, Billy grab the key. Diop jets.

Billy checks his watch: 12:01 a.m. He was supposed to meet Mia.

**EXT. STREET - NIGHT**

Diop drops Billy off. Billy limps out of the car and looks around for Mia. Check his watch. It's 12:08. Then, Mia appears.

MIA

You should never keep a pretty girl waiting. Anyone ever tell you that?

BILLY

Yeah. You see which way she went?

MIA

Har har. Now why am I in Chinatown  
ten minutes past the witching hour?

(beat)

Are you alright?

BILLY

It's a long story. Maybe one day  
I'll tell you.

Billy produces the key. Unlocks a store's gate. Mia looks at the awning, but it's all Chinese characters. Billy lifts the gate.

Mia, stunned. Billy unlocks the door, enters. Lights go on and we see what Mia sees: It's a bright, well-appointed nail salon.

**INT. IRIS NAIL - NIGHT**

Billy paints Mia's fingers with the nail hardener she wanted.

MIA

Do you know how much this costs?

BILLY

I try not to worry about money.

MIA

Seriously: Tell me what happened.

BILLY

Nothing. I hailed a cab, but tripped  
stepping off the sidewalk. So, I did a  
faceplant. Hurt my lip, hurt my leg.

MIA

Billy, you're too innocent... You have  
to make something up. Say you got in a  
fight. Say you got hurt at a party.

BILLY

... I got hurt at a party.

MIA

Girls like an element of mystery.

BILLY

I like who I am... Parts, anyway.

Sitting cross-legged, Billy unravels, then jumps off the counter.

He falls. Mia sees him, sprawled out and surrounded by \$100,000.

**EXT. NEW YORK - MORNING**

Deliveries are made, streets are swept.

**INT. GRAND CENTRAL - DAY**

Billy and Cream converge. They shake hands.

**INT. SUBWAY - DAY**

The pair ride the subway.

CREAM

I wanna know how the sausage gets made.

BILLY

Well...there are a lot of moving parts.

**INTERCUT WITH:**

**INT. MINETTA TAVERN (FLASHBACK) - DAY**

Over Billy revealing the depth of the con, we see it play out.

BILLY

Let's start from the end: We met The Mark at Minetta Tavern. You meet three kids at one of the city's best spots which you yourself can't get into, it confers legitimacy. Carlucci conned his way into getting a table in the first place. He called ahead, said he was proposing, knowing that when he showed up with no table, they weren't turning him away on the biggest night of his life. Then he has a fight with Sofia, she leaves in a huff, and then he tipped 300 dollars. So showing up the next morning as the broken lover who tipped big, the hostess was only too happy to give him a table when he mentioned having a meeting later on.

**INT. SHAM APARTMENT (FLASHBACK) - NIGHT**

Sofia and The Mark. The room featuring the lasers and paintings.

BILLY

Before that, Sofia met with The Mark at a luxury apartment we sublet. All cash, no paper trail.

**INT. SOFIA'S ROOM (FLASHBACK) - DAY**

Sofia measures red laser pointers. She measures the circumference.

**INT. LOFT (FLASHBACK) - DAY**

As we saw at the start of Act Two, Sofia and Carlucci used a band saw. Large picture frames abound.

Carlucci sticks one of several laser pointers into a cylindrical slot he drilled through the frame. Sofia removes a pointer, then wraps a slice of duct tape around the trigger button. Re-inserts.

BILLY

Once we showed The Mark these no-name paintings guarded by lasers, he was sold. Everything to that point was so cloaked in legitimacy. We were vetted in his eyes by having Minetta Tavern, a really nice place, and then lasers.

**INT. PUCK BUILDING (FLASHBACK) - NIGHT**

Elderly Asian folks eat shark fin soup.

BILLY

Most importantly? We had the shark fin soup.

CREAM

Yes. What was that all about?

BILLY

Black Rain was simply us baiting him. To know that painting was legitimate, to see the lasers, then to go to a fancy place like The Puck Building on top of Minetta... There was no way he was walking out of that place without the Rockwell. Plus, you were buying, too. Safety in numbers. To walk in and see 300 Asians, he assumed they were all there for like, Chinese Art Week, which was the theme sale Sofia told him the night was about. The Rockwell is American, but 90% of the inventory was Chinese. And again, making the sale last night at Puck instead of the penthouse with Sofia? It's so significant. The spectacle was just that final layer of legitimacy.

CREAM

I don't get it. Chinese Art Week?

BILLY

They had to be Chinese, so The Mark couldn't speak with them in English. So he couldn't discover that people weren't there for art, but for food.

**EXT. CHINATOWN RESTAURANT (FLASHBACK) - DAY**

In Mandarin, signs on the window read, "Free Shark Fin Soup!"

As we saw earlier, Billy talks with Owner, who gives him keys to the nail salon.

BILLY (V.O.)

Several Asian cultures love shark fin soup, right? Major delicacy. Weddings are often judged by the quality of fin they serve. We had a friend who owns a Chinese restaurant advertise the soup for free, and people came in. Then he told them there'd be a raffle where winners get invited to a party at The Puck Building. Where they'd get their free shark fin. Our friend then called the people who signed-up, but...but... he only invited people who spoke Chinese, and Chinese alone. No one who spoke Chinese and English could come.

(beat)

You were the only American there. You were the one person The Mark could speak to. Who'd vouch for the paintings.

CREAM

Huh. I just feel bad for the sharks.

BILLY

Don't.

**EXT. FISH MARKET (FLASHBACK) - DAY**

Carlucci and Dock Worker, on the waterfront.

As we saw, Carlucci trades Moissanite rings for crates of fish.

BILLY

The shark fin soup turned out to be fake. A dock worker conned Carlucci.

Dock Worker walks away from Carlucci with a small smile.

CREAM

We got conned? That's perfect.

**EXT. YANKEE STADIUM - DAY**

The pair get off the 4 train. Make their way to the stadium.

**INT. EXECUTIVE SUITE - DAY**

Now, they sit in a well-appointed office overlooking the diamond.

A honey-lit trophy case is unlocked. A hand appears. Removes one of several baseballs inside. It's Suit 1, the front office exec Marko negotiated with. He tosses a ball to Billy, who catches it.

SUIT 1

So your wife was a big Dodgers fan?

CREAM

She was. But her pain... My pain, it was more about her father blaming her for Mickey dropping that third strike.

SUIT 1

Yeah. The only thing I hate more than the media are the fans... Let him see the ball, Billy.

CREAM

Oh, no. I refuse to even touch it.  
(beat)  
That ball never gave her a chance.

BILLY

Cream...I went through Hell for this.

Billy flips it back to the Suit, who locks it in the case.

SUIT 1

You guys should maybe set up a Cayman account. Move up to the big leagues.

BILLY

Marko has a Swiss account; it's cool. Did you know you can get a numbered Swiss account for \$900 online?

SUIT 1

Billy, I'm married. I make mid-seven figures a year. Of course I know that.

BILLY

Right. So, the reason I came by, other than to put a bow on things and shake hands... Uh, Marko told me that your guys were saying disparaging things about Sofia's body.

SUIT 1

I don't know if I'd characterize them  
as "disparaging."

(beat)

It was in poor taste.

BILLY

I appreciate that... But I was just  
wondering if you could sorta...just  
...maybe call her up and apologize?

SUIT 1

Why, did she say something?

BILLY

... I'm saying something.

Suit 1 smiles.

SUIT 1

You're a good kid, Billy. And one day,  
you're gonna stop betting on black,  
and start betting on yourself.

BILLY

What do you mean?

SUIT

One day, you're gonna set aside some  
coin, or probably get a scholarship,  
and you're gonna go to college.

Suit 1 looks at the Yankee memorabilia on the wall.

SUIT

You can't be a kid forever, Billy.  
If you ever get tired of fantasy-land  
and you want a real job...let me know.

BILLY

It's funny you say that... I was  
about to say the same thing to you.

**INT. SUBWAY - DAY**

Billy and Cream watch the Bronx roll by.

BILLY

Did you have fun the last few days?

CREAM

For the first time in a long time.

BILLY

... Do you want to be on the team?



CREAM

What would that entail?

BILLY

We're old school con artists. We're not kids who know how to rob banks from a computer or steal Bitcoins on the Dark Web. We're old school con artists. And again, we don't smash anyone who doesn't deserve it.

CREAM

... I really did have fun.

BILLY

Then let's go again. Every week, we do something new. It's an adventure, Cream. And we could really use you. Professionally and personally, we could all really use you.

Cream begins to tear up. After a moment, Billy holds his hand.

**EXT. STREET - DAY**

Scooter and Carlucci walk and talk, the pillar of happiness.

**INT. YVES SAINT LAURENT - DAY**

During Marko's first scene, she conned the YSL suit -- 34-26-36.

She finishes speaking with the English Manager, then leaves to join Sofia outside.

Manager opens an envelope. One which Marko just gave her.

It's filled with cash. Then, Manager sees Yankees tickets.

She heads to the registers. Cool as an English cucumber and without breaking stride, she nonchalantly drops the Yankees tickets in a garbage can. All while smiling ear-to-ear.

**EXT. CEMETERY - DAY**

Cream approaches his wife's headstone.

The stone reads, "Eleanor May LaRue."

**INT. EXECUTIVE SUITE (FLASHBACK) - DAY**

We travel back to a moment ago and see what happened after Suit 1 flipped Billy the Mickey Owen ball. As Suit 1 and Cream converse:

Billy, his lap obscured by Suit 1's desk, places the ball in the crook behind his knee. Then, from his cargo pants, the ball which Scooter got from Bauman Rare Books is produced. Seeing how it's a ball from the same World Series, it passes the sniff test when Suit 1 casually examines it. Suit examines it after Billy flips it back.

Finally, Billy slips the Mickey Owen ball into his cargo pants.

**EXT. CEMETERY - DAY**

We're back with Cream at his wife's headstone.

He produces the Mickey Owen ball. Admires it.

He sets it on top of the headstone.

Cream leaves. The ball, in its final resting place.

**INT. CHURCH - DAY**

Billy, where we initially met him, fighting an unrelenting, internal battle between The Forces of Good and The Forces of Evil.

**INT. CONFESSIONAL BOX - DAY**

Billy signs the cross. For the last time...

PRIEST

In Nomine Patris et Filii et Spiritus  
Sancti.

BILLY

Forgive me, Father. For I have sinned.

CUT TO BLACK.

**THE NEW YORKER**