

FIASCO HEIGHTS

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FIASCO HEIGHTS

WE OPEN ON A CITY LIMIT SIGN:

WELCOME TO FIASCO HEIGHTS **Population: 733,966**

And what makes this sign so unique are the successive BULLET HOLES throughout it -as well as- the fact that 733,966 has been crossed out repeatedly and replaced with lower numbers.

NOW - THE CAMERA ROCKETS INTO THE SKY, WHERE WE GET A FULL FRONTAL VIEW OF... THE GRIMMEST METROPOLIS YOU'VE EVER SEEN. Lurid skyscrapers. Gothic architecture. You won't find this place on a map.

LUCKY (V.O.)

Fiasco Heights. You drive to hell and back, you just might find the place.

Camera pushes in closer now, gliding aerially above an arched bridge stretching across a cloud of mist. The only entrance into Fiasco Heights. And so, we converge into a sea of neon.

LUCKY (V.O.)

It's a dead end turn with only one end in sight...

We sweep left, looping past a GARBAGE TRUCK dumping an entire load of **bodybags** into the bay. Swooping right, we hover through a city park -while- two mobsters shovel fresh dirt onto a makeshift grave site.

LUCKY (V.O.)

Right and wrong are afterthoughts here. Everyone's decked in the same dark shade of gray...

A stroke of lightning streaks across the sky. It outlines the city in raw illumination -as- we track through the rooftops. Gunshots, sirens... echoing all around us like static noise.

LUCKY (V.O.)

All sins forgiven, never forgotten. No laws. No saving grace. Morality is a fallen angel in this town.

Cue the rain. Heavy rain. A torrential downpour.

LUCKY (V.O.)

And here, the angels fall faster than the raindrops.

Our sky tour draws to a close as we come to THE WATER TOWER BUILDING, standing tall within the city's axis.

LUCKY (V.O.)

The cycle is as endless as it is vicious. It begins here.

(MORE)

LUCKY (cont'd)

It ends here. And a whole lot'a
people die in between.

SMASH TITLE: FIASCO HEIGHTS **:ROLL TITLE**

EXT. ROOFTOP - **CONTINUOUS**

Camera cranes onto the roof, where we'll find some sorry sap dangling over the edge, staring straight into 47 stories of pure gravity. Looks like he's spent his evening getting his face fist-fucked into ground beef. And...

Three anonymous thugs watch with a smile. One of them holds a lit match beneath the clothesline that's keeping him around.

LUCKY DOYLE screams bloody murder -as- the clothesline begins to drop. We zoom into his face, then...

LUCKY (V.O.)
STOP.

SCENE FREEZES: RAINDROPS PAUSING IN MID-AIR.

LUCKY (V.O.)
I might need to explain this.
(beat)
The guy about to take a swan dive
into rush hour traffic...

SLAM SUB: **"LUCKY DOYLE"**

LUCKY (V.O.)
That's me. Lucky Doyle. The
unluckiest bastard you'll ever
catch narratin' stories. See, I've
got what you'd call a winning
problem. In that it never happens.

INSERT A SERIES OF FLASH CUTS WITH SUBS:

"MONDAY" - Lucky losing his chips at a POKER TABLE.

"TUESDAY" - CRAPS TABLE. The dice go snake eyes.

"WEDNESDAY" - HORSE RACES. His horse comes in dead last.

"THURSDAY" - Back to losing his ass at the POKER TABLE.

"FRIDAY" - Despondent as more chips are swiped away.

LUCKY (V.O.)
Wasn't always like this though. Got
my start as a PI. Independent firm.
That's before I got hung on things
like blackjack and horse #5...

FLASH INSERT: A CARTON OF GLUE.

LUCKY (V.O.)
God rest 'im.

BACK ON: LUCKY SWAYING FROM THE CLOTHESLINE.

LUCKY (V.O.)
So here I am, stuck in first gear &
double overtime. Losing streaks
like mine only hit in fatal doses,
and I'm comin' down with a fever.
(beat)
It all started this mornin'. That's
when things hit the shitter. So
let's just start from the beginning.

SMASH CUT TO:

EXT. ST. CHARLES CATHOLIC CHURCH - **MORNING**

SMASH SUB: **"THE BEGINNING"**

LUCKY DOYLE stands outside the biggest church you've ever seen. More gold crucifixes than heaven itself. Rubys. Jewels. Religion is obviously big business here.

Lucky steps up to TWO BOUNCERS, arms crossed.

LUCKY
Holy Mary. Holy Mary. Holy Mary.

The bouncers step aside. One of them opens the door.

INT. CONFESSIONAL BOOTH - **CONTINUOUS**

Lucky shuts himself inside an elegant confessional.

LUCKY
Forgive me father, I've sinned.
It's been three days since my last
confession.

The window opens to reveal FATHER PISARRO, an elderly priest with graying hair and a moustache to match.

FATHER PISARRO
(thick Irish accent)
Three days? You were just in here
yesterday, Doyle.

LUCKY
I sinned again... and... I need to
put fifty grand on tonight's fight.

FATHER PISARRO
Are you screwin' with me? My book
has you a quarter in the hole. You
need to pay up, Doyle... collection
box is next to the holy water.

LUCKY

See, that's part of my confession.
I ain't got the money. Was hoping
to get by on that whole "forgive my
debts" thing.

FATHER PISARRO

(with a chuckle)

That's just a limp clause. You want
your debts erased, better find
another church. This one's
Catholic.

LUCKY

Well, actually, I was hoping you'd
let me play my debt. Spot me the
money and ride it on tonight's
fight. I hear there's a patsy in
the ring.

Father Pisarro shakes his head in disgust.

FATHER PISARRO

Look, I'll forgive your sins, say a
little prayer... I'll even throw in
a blessing free of charge. But your
bets are no good here, Doyle.

Lucky gets desperate.

LUCKY

Father Pisarro, this fight is a no
brainer. I win, you win - blessings
all around. I need this! Call it
amazing grace in tens and twenties.

Father Pisarro slams the window in his face. Lucky sits back
a beaten man. UNTIL -- THE DOOR TO THE BOOTH SWINGS OPEN.

Now - **A HUGE, MUSCULAR GOON IN A PRIEST'S COLLAR** GRABS LUCKY
BY THE SHIRT. He RIPS him from the confessional and SLAMS him
against the wall.

FATHER PISARRO

Lucky -- meet THE POPE.

The Pope pushes his forearm into Lucky's throat.

THE POPE

Hear you got a tithing problem,
punk!!

Lucky replies with, "Ugghhh."

FATHER PISARRO

Now, listen up. I'm feeling a
little religious today, so let's
put faith in motion. We'll spot you
the money on tonight's fight.

(MORE)

FATHER PISARRO (cont'd)

But know this, if you ain't
grinning by the 12th round, Pope's
gonna give you a Judas neck
massage.

The Pope drops Lucky -- he falls like a twisted cement bag.

LUCKY
Alright Father. I get it.

Pope grabs Lucky and begins dragging him to the door.

FATHER PISARRO
Good. Now go with God. And get the
fuck outta here, my son.

ANGLE ON: Lucky being dragged across the purple carpet. Past a HOLY WATER HOT TUB at full capacity. Past the rehearsing boy's choir at full hum. And past a row of roulette tables.

LUCKY (V.O.)
Every bet in Fiasco goes down in
the "good book". And if you don't
pay out, your page is erased.
Permanently.
(passed more gambling)
How's that for excommunication?

And just as Lucky is tossed out the front door:

LUCKY (V.O.)
But enough about me. Every story has
two sides... and here's the heavy
one. Lemme acquaint you with our
hero... well, hero might be
stretchin' it a bit, but without him
I'd be sledge-fucked into oblivion.
(beat)
He's a real fuckin' heartbreaker,
and the breaks are permanent.

SMASH CUT TO:

INT. MEN'S ROOM - LAST CHANCE DINER - DAY

WE'RE CLOSE ON THE TEAR FILLED EYES OF A DYING MAN.

FLASK
*Dammit! I told ya once and a
thousand fuckin' times before that,
I haven't seen your gal.*

SLAM! Flask's face is smashed against the inside of a urinal.

And as he rears back, we find the hot point of a .357 GLOCK 31
pressed firm to his temple. He's drowning in a pool of sweat.

FLASK
 (choking on blood)
 Dear Father, who art in heaven,
 hear my final prayer...

SLAM!

VOICE (O.S.)
 Focus on me for a second.
 (beat)
Where is the girl?

Flask's ASSASSIN readies his gun with a firm grip. His identity is hidden beneath a weathered Fedora and the lifted collar of an overcoat. We'll be introduced soon enough.

FLASK
 I don't know nothing about that
 broad's disappearin' act! Zippo!!
 So I ain't got shit to spill on ya.
 (changing gears)
 God, if you're up there... I'll do
 anything...

SLAM! Flask spits a few chips of porcelain from his mouth.

FLASK
 (relenting)
 Okay - okay. Fiasco Heights. My
 brother Sweats has seen her there.
 Says she's got something valuable
 that he'd love to get his paws on.
 Everyone would for that mater. So
 I'd start lookin' for another prom
 date... chances are she's already
 dead.

VOICE (O.S.)
 You been talkin' to your brother
 again, aye Flask? Tell me, who else
 ya been chattin' to? You tip the
 outfit I was headed back this way?
 (silence)
 Did you!?!?

FLASK
 You're damn right I did!

KILLER PULLS THE HAMMER BACK NOW.

Flask loses his nerve. He tears up like a school girl just cut from cheerleading try outs.

FLASK
 I'm gonna miss my family. I got two
 little boys. A wife. This is gonna
 be hard on them. Please, God...

VOICE (O.S.)
 Quit playin' like a family man,
 Flask. You're just another one of
 the bad guys.

Killer stays calm, professional. And we can tell he's one cool motherfucker just by the suave in his voice.

VOICE (O.S.)
 You finished?

FLASK
 Yeah. I'm finished.

Killer slowly lifts his face to the florescent light. He's a striking presence, crisp and clean cut. Chiseled jawline. Lean build. Dirty blonde hair - with a hint of charm and menace in his eye. This is Nick Prine (aka NICK THE SAINT).

NICK THE SAINT
 Say the word.

Flask hesitates. He takes a deep breath - his last deep breath - then closes his eyes.

FLASK
 Amen.

And suddenly, Flask reaches back for A SWITCHBLADE strapped to his ankle. He quickly pops the blade, but Nick doesn't give him a chance to do much else.

BAM!!!

A SPRAY OF BLOODY PULP FRECKLES THE ATMOSPHERE LIKE A B-POSITIVE RAIN SHOWER, AS...

SCENE FREEZES: on Nick's semi-vicious glare.

SLAM SUB: "NICK THE SAINT"

LUCKY (V.O.)
 Meet Nick the Saint. He's what we call a professional "trigger". That's a gun for hire for all you tourists who don't speak the language.

AND SCENE FLIPS COUNTERCLOCKWISE LIKE THE CHAMBER OF A REVOLVER, transitioning us into A MONTAGE OF NICK FIRING FROM VARIOUS ANGLES. ALL STYLISH KILLS.

LUCKY (V.O.)
 He's one of the best -- resume is nothin' but gold stars.

THEN SCENE REVOLVES **BACK TO:**

The bathroom. Nick signs the cross over Flask's corpse, then kneels down and begins frisking it over...

LUCKY (V.O.)

Try not to let the blood n' guts
turn ya sideways. Nicky believes in
things like final prayers - last
rites. He's one of the good guys.

...And Nick removes Flask's wallet and steals a twenty.

LUCKY (V.O.)

Well, as good as it gets in this
story anyway.

Nick cleans up in the mirror, wipes some blood from his chin.

INT. THE LAST CHANCE DINER - **CONTINUOUS**

The patrons sit motionless as a blood-splattered Nick approaches the counter. He slides the twenty to the waitress, and takes one long sip from his pre-ordered ROOT BEER FLOAT. Maybe even licks some whipped cream off the spoon.

Then, he winks at a little girl starring nearby... turns... slaps the skipping jukebox... and exits the diner.

EXT. THE LAST CHANCE DINER - **CONTINUOUS**

It's raining again. Wind ripping across the open road. And all we can make out is a flashing NEON SIGN as Nick exits the diner.

"THE LAST CHANCE"

It's an old grease-pit tucked within the trees of the highway shoulder. A metallic glimmer fading to rust.

Streaks of blue neon outline Nick's face in sharp flashes as he adjusts the fit of his Fedora. He steps into the pouring rain, waiting. Until...

HEADLIGHTS. **A TAXI CAB** screeches into the parking lot and slams to a stop beside Nick. He gets in.

INT. TAXI CAB - **NIGHT**

Leather seats ripped from years of wear. Floor sprinkled with trash and cigarette ash. This ride has stories.

CABBIE
Where to fellas?

NICK THE SAINT
Fiasco Heights. Hotel Florencia in
the Sicilian Quarter.

CABBIE

Oh, that don't exist anymore. See, 'bout a year back Tony Fingers got waxed, and his crew was taken over by that Jewish gang on the East Side. Now, they got the whole damn block in yarmulkes. You ever seen an Italian in a yarmulke? It's worth full fuckin' admission.

(beat)

It's called the Synagogue Inn now.

NICK THE SAINT

Just take me to the cheapest place you know. I ain't stayin' long.

CABBIE

(turning back)

You sure you wanna go this road? They don't call this the Last Chance for nothing.

Nick jars the rain from his overcoat, and gives Cabbie a nod that says "Just drive". And so our driver pops the clutch.

CABBIE

Well. Consider it a fare's warning.

FOOT HITS THE GAS - ENGINE REV'S - TIRES SQUEAL - RUBBER BURNS

The cab speeds into the night leaving the "Last Chance" in a cloud of smoke. Neon fades into the background.

CABBIE

More damn rain - happens twice a day now. Friggin' place is a flood with traffic lights.

(beat)

In for business or pleasure?

Nick whips out A LIGHTER and fires up a fresh smoke.

NICK THE SAINT

Business.

CABBIE

What kind of business?

NICK THE SAINT

Mine.

Cabbie takes this as his cue to ease up on the questions.

Passing a sign now:

5 MILES TO FIASCO HEIGHTS - WHERE IT'S ALWAYS SUNNY!!

Cabbie grips the wheel tight and rounds a slick curve. Nick glides across the back seat.

The ride hugs another curve, brakes riding heavy this time. And Nick leans forward as we enter *THE FIASCO BAY BRIDGE*.

NICK THE SAINT (CONT'D)
 Ya know what, driver? I might use
 you after all. See, that business
 you asked me about... just happens
 to be the unfinished kind.

CABBIE (DELI)
 Then if it matters, the name's
 Delicontessi. But you can call me
 Deli for cuts.

NICK THE SAINT
 Fine, Deli, I'm here to find a
 missin' dame... and kill anyone
 whose laid a goddamn hand on her
 between now and then.
 (inhale-exhale)
 Point is, I'd like to retain your
 services while I'm in town.

Deli offers his card over the seat.

DELI
 Call that number anytime,
 anywhere... I'll only be a minute.
 How do we find this missin' gal?

NICK THE SAINT
 She's the one with the long green
 heart. Can't miss her.

Cab passes along FIASCO'S TONIC REEF. Odd piers and wharfs
 litter our view. The smell of saltwater & rotting corpses.

DELI
 So what do they call you, friend?

NICK THE SAINT
 (hesitant)
 I'm Nick. Nick the Saint.

Driver immediately angles the rear view into the back seat.

DELI
 Jesus H. Washington! You can't be
 serious. Word on the street is that
 The Saint was a pale horse. Dead as
 nails!

NICK THE SAINT
 Yeah, well, I guess the street's
 full of shit.

And the cab slams to a stop in front of THE FIASCO HOTEL.
 Type of place where scumbags get nightly discounts and
 termites are rent free.

SFX OVER SCENE: **DING. DING. DING.**

SLAM CUT TO:

INT. BOXING ARENA - **"LATER THAT NIGHT"**

Two fighters going at it in flashes of flesh and blood. Jabs echoing through the arena like thunder.

In the 5th row, Lucky screams with clenched fists. He's cheering for his life, yelling for his fighter (RED SHORTS) with blow-by-blow accuracy. And in 5, 4, 3, 2...

BAM!!! RED SHORTS TAKES AN UPPERCUT THAT PUTS HIS LIGHTS OUT.

And Lucky's not so cheery anymore.

SUPER: **\$-50,000**

We stay on Lucky's blank expression as the above number quickly BEGINS TO RISE UNTIL HITTING **-\$100,000. "DING".**

ANGLE ON: THE LOSING BOXER'S EYES ROLL BACK in his head seconds before he drops like a wet noodle.

Lucky swallows his soul when the ref calls the fight. It's wall to wall cheers as the winner celebrates his victory. And across the arena, we notice A GROUP OF PRIESTS all staring at Lucky from an exit tunnel. *Shit... Shit...*

LUCKY (V.O.)
Shit! That's the word for straight fucked. Smells nice n' deep too.

In an act of last resort, Lucky rockets out of his seat and hauls ass down the aisle. He topples a few popcorn vendors in his haste for the exit. And...

The priests immediately push through the celebrating spectators in hot pursuit.

INT. BOXING ARENA - ATRIUM - **CONTINUOUS**

Lucky skids around a corner, and straight into the most gorgeous blonde we'll see for the next 90 minutes. Her purse is knocked across the floor as he plows into her.

LUCKY (V.O.)
But this is when I really ran into trouble...

FREEZE ON: HOPE CAUFIELD. She's beautiful. Flowing blonde hair, heavy shine. Fair skin. Thick red lips. Curves right out of a magazine. Here's a femme fatale to the fucking max. And... she's wearing a locket with A SAPPHIRE HEART on it.

SLAM SUB: **"TROUBLE"**

LUCKY (V.O.)
I just didn't know it yet.

UNFREEZE: Lucky quickly reaches down to collect a few of her spilled belongings. Lipstick. Virginia Slims. Etc.

LUCKY
Really sorry, lady.

HOPE
Just watch it, will ya? You could really hurt a gal with all that hustle.

LUCKY
Sorry again. But what are the odds of you and me...

HOPE
None to never.

LUCKY
...Okay -- gotta run.

And he returns to a dead sprint.

EXT. BOXING ARENA - ALLEY - **CONTINUOUS**

THREE PRIESTS slam through the side exit into a pissed up alley. But it's all clear, no signs of washed up gamblers. The priests go back inside.

Slowly, Lucky steps out from behind an overturned port o'potty -which- just happens to have a homeless guy currently residing in it. Seconds pass, until...

A SLEEK, BLACK **CADILLAC** PULLS INTO THE ALLEY.

Lucky ducks back down just as A MYSTERIOUS FIGURE leaves the arena with an arm around our girl Hope. But she isn't happy.

They get in the Cadillac. It pulls away. And Lucky comes up for air, reading the license plate numbers aloud before the car disappears completely...

LUCKY
10K QJ1.
(now V.O.)
And there was the royal flush.

Suddenly:

PINSTripes (O.S.)
(a tad British)
Tough loss, aye Lucky? Bet it feels like all you can sevens at the craps buffet. Win none, lose 'em all.

Fuck! He knows this voice. Cautiously, Lucky turns to face...

LUCKY (V.O.)
The God Squad.

WE ZOOM AROUND TO FIND THREE MEN - CAMERA ROTATES, FREEZING ON EACH GANGSTER - BRANDING THEM AS #1, #2, and #3.

LUCKY (V.O.)
They call 'em that partly because they're the loan out bruisers for the Catholic Syndicate. The other reason I'll mention in a second. Point is, they been lookin' to give me a lead shower ever since my checks turned to rubber and I tried to bounce the big fight.

Zooming slowly, we come face to face with #1. A slick greaser in a custom pinstripe suit. EVEN HIS HAT HAS STRIPES. When he turns his head down, they meet perfectly with those on his suit. Meet PINSTRIPES.

LUCKY (V.O.)
Guy on the left is Pinstripes. He's as queer as a glass slipper. But don't take him for a dolly, or he'll bend ya harder than a sunset in boys town.

ON #2. A BLACK MAN, late twenties, cleft chin. Muscular. Toned. He wears a zipped up sweatshirt and a matching headband.

LUCKY (V.O.)
That looks like Knockout Jones. Three time undisputed champion - previous belt holder. He put Juan De Pompi in a box after the title bout a year back. I was in the fifth row.
(squinting)
At least I think that's Knockout Jones.

#3. THE POPE smiles viciously. Again, probably one of the homeliest thugs you'll ever lay eyes on.

LUCKY (V.O.)
And you've already met this ugly son of a bitch.

Lucky pans the alley, trying to come up with a quick strategy.

LUCKY (V.O.)
God squad reason #2. Even if you don't believe in God, you'd better be prayin' to someone that these fucks ain't pinnin' your tail.

Trying to stall:

LUCKY

Look, fellas, my nerves are gettin'
numb now, but I'll have a roll a'
nickels for ya by mornin'...

PINSTRIPE

We don't want nickels, Lucky.

AND, in a blink, Lucky tries to make a break for it! He jives
-then- spins straight into direct range of KNOCKOUT JONES.

LUCKY'S POV: A RIGHT HOOK UNCOILS IN HIS FACE. **BAM!**

SMASH TO BLACK:

LUCKY (V.O.)

Yep. That's Knockout Jones.

FADE IN:

INT. ROOF TOP - FIASCO HEIGHTS - **NIGHT**

SLAM SUB: "NOW"

Lucky is dangling among the skyscrapers of Fiasco Heights.
THE THREE GUNMEN dispersed around him... as we know.

LUCKY (V.O.)

And that about covers it. Consider
yourself filled in.

Pinstripes takes a seat in front of us. A fashionable man. He
has a European accent... smokes cloves... and, yes, very gay.

PINSTRIPE

(very refined)

Cheers Lucky, welcome to the last
night of your life.

LUCKY

Look, Pinstripes, I swear I'll get
ya the money...

PINSTRIPE

Time to settle up. No more scams.
No more deals. And no more of that
orphan paper you've been throwing
at us for the past month.

LUCKY

Just gimme five days.

FREEZE FRAME

LUCKY (V.O.)

Five. My favorite number. I do
everything in fives. In fact, it's
the only stable recurring factor in
my life. Superstition, ya know.

UNFREEZE: Pinstripes takes a puff from his clove. He stares at a visible tattoo on Lucky's forearm. It says: Let It Ride.

PINSTripes
What's your game, Lucky? Gotta fix
on the Queen a' Hearts? C'mon,
what's the one you "Let It Ride" on?

Lucky bites his lip. No sense dying a humiliated man.

PINSTripes (CONT'D)
I have a game as well. I call it
"Get Lucky". 'Course, you haven't
got anything to play with, so I
guess we'll wager on your life.

LUCKY
I got the money! SHIT! DON'T DROP
ME! Just gimme 'til...

Pinstripes cuts him off. Pulls a silver coin from his pocket.

PINSTripes
In the spirit of games, and the fact
we both like playing 'em, I'm gonna
flip quid to see if you free-fall.

And now, Pope **strikes a match** under Lucky's rope.

LUCKY (CONT'D)
PLEASE -- I'll do *anything*!

PINSTripes
Anything? Gee, I suppose that's the
magic word. Put it out, Pope.
(Pope puts out the match)
Ever hear of a "Spades' Bribe",
Lucky? It's an old gesture offered
to shamus shitbags like you before
they're done in. A "one last try"
job in exchange for your debt, since
we all know you aren't good for the
money. Here's the pigeon...

Pinstripes removes A POLAROID picture from his jacket. And as he shows it to Lucky, we recognize it as the beautiful blonde from the boxing match... HOPE CAUFIELD.

INSERT POLAROID: HOPE LEAVING THE SAVINGS & LOAN BANK

LUCKY
I seen that broad before.

PINSTripes
Well now you must find her. She has
something that our dear Catholic
friends want badly. And if you can
turn her up by midnight tomorrow,
your debt is all squares.
(inhale-exhale)
(MORE)

PINSTripes (cont'd)

We don't bloody wish to kill ya,
Luck. You're an investment. That
would be bad business. But if you
don't have the girl in 24 ticks,
our little game goes sudden death.

He slaps Lucky, driving the point home.

PINSTripes
You catch the drift?

LUCKY
Yeah.

PINSTripes
Splendid. And don't take me for a
Lucy. I'm double cream - double
sugar, but that don't make up for
mean streaks.

Pinstripes flicks the clove at Lucky, then nods to Jones.

PINSTripes
Give him the sleeping pill, Champ.

"DING. DING." Lucky grits his teeth as Jones winds up the
right hook. Here it comes like a speeding...

SMASH TO:

EXT. CITY STREET - NIGHT

A CAR JETS PAST SCREEN IN A BLUR -as- Lucky does a triple
axel from it at 40 miles per hour. He hits the ground in a
series of barrel rolls and a mouthful of concrete.

In a half-conscious daze, Lucky sits up to catch his breath.
The blinking neon of "ANNE'S SODA SHOP" flaring vibrantly
across the street. Attention turns to it. And off that we:

INSERT MONTAGE OF FLASHING NEON:

FIASCO. NUDE. FIASCO. XXX. GUNS. FIASCO. \$\$\$. DRUGS. XXX....

"THE FIASCO HOTEL"

INT. BEDROOM - FIASCO HOTEL - NIGHT

Nick sits on the edge of a bed, buckling his pants. His
temporary companion cradles him from behind. Now, he places
HIS OWN PHOTOGRAPH atop the night-stand.

INSERT PICTURE: NICK AND HOPE SMILING IN EACH OTHER'S ARMS.

NICK THE SAINT
Harley, I need the word out on this
dame. Just see if any of the other
gals know the face.

HARLEY strokes her hand across his bare back. He has a clearly visible scar. A BULLET WOUND.

HARLEY
Who is she?

NICK THE SAINT
Just a gal I'm lookin' for.

Nick grabs his shirt. He continues dressing as Harley moves into the light. The body, the lips... she'd be perfect if not on double overtime.

HARLEY
So did ya come here to *pump* me for information, or notch up another free lay? Because I take it ya didn't come back to see me.

NICK THE SAINT
Like I said, it's about a girl.
Unfortunately, you're not it.

Harley grabs THE PICTURE and *RIPS* it in front of Nick's face.

HARLEY
I liked you once, ya know.

NICK THE SAINT
That's the problem, doll. Cupid shoots to kill here. And apparently so do you if the money's right.
(insensitive)
You used to be a classy hustle, Harley. Then I leave town and you spread like butter. What's with it?

Harley shoves Nick off of the bed.

HARLEY
I thought you were gone, Nick!
(angry now)
You've known me for a liftetime.
Don't treat me like some cheap trick on 9 to 5 chump change.

NICK THE SAINT
You are cheap, Harley. But those tricks are all I've got.

Harley slumps into the sheets, where Nick's gun is nestled right under his pillow. She takes it, hides it behind her:

HARLEY
Just get outta here, will ya.
(beat)
And know that Doughboy already caught wind you're in Fiasco. He's put The Ice Cream Man on your heel.

NICK THE SAINT
The who?

HARLEY

The craziest cat on The Franchise payroll. Set a new body count high according to city records -- goes by the name Mr. Frosty. And that fuckity fox adds a new flavor to his menu every time he lays a vic on ice. Word is you're next.

NICK THE SAINT
It's all peaches n' cream to me.

Nick slides into his overcoat and goes for the door.

HARLEY

Wait! Nicky... no matter how many men I fool with, you're still the only guy I kiss for free.

He pauses momentarily... thinks a beat... then removes his wallet. THE ENTIRE THING IS EMPTY. He smiles at Harley.

NICK THE SAINT
Right. Keep the change.

She gives him a playful but guilty smirk as he exits.

EXT. FIASCO AVENUE - DAWN

A few drops of rain split against the asphalt, signaling a brief intermission in the hovering storm above. As...

An anxious NEWSBOY runs to the corner with the morning's freshest headline. He lifts the paper over his head.

NEWSBOY
Extra, extra!! Underdog takes "Gold Mitts" in upset match. Extra! Third bank stripped clean by nefarious road show -- vault goes bare in 60 seconds. Hot news here!! Mormon gets released on good behavior...

Nick stops dead upon hearing the name "MORMON". He grabs a paper and flips the kid a quarter. Browses the front page.

NEWSBOY
Thanks mister.

NICK THE SAINT
No sweat, kid.

Nick takes the last drag from his cigarette and wedges the paper inside his overcoat. Here comes the rain again.

INT. ANNE'S SODA SHOP - DAWN

LUCKY, looking more unkempt than ever, shuffles a deck of cards in his hand. He only looks up as NICK enters the shop.

He flips the POLAROID OF HOPE to the top of his deck...

LUCKY (V.O.)
Here I am shufflin' for the Queen
a' Hearts, when in walks my
wildcard. And this is where the
ride begins, so buckle the fuck up.

CLOSE ON: A STREAM OF AMBER LIQUID flows into an icy mug. A fresh layer of foam crests the rim, gliding down the glass.

ANNE
Well, look who's back? Alive. And
soaked to the bone I might add.

NICK THE SAINT
It's okay. I needed a shower.

ANNE slams the mug on the counter and plops in a scoop of ice cream.

ANNE
One root beer float. Your usual.

NICK THE SAINT
Thanks Anne.

Nick has a seat and sets down the damp paper.

ANNE
Rumors say ya went and got yourself killed... where ya really been?

NICK THE SAINT
Resting. In peace. But I'm back now looking for a missin' person.

ANNE
But ain't you the reason they go missin' in the first place?

Nick tosses the paper aside and takes a long slug off the float. He loves it - pops the cherry in his mouth. Now...

Lucky ponies up to the counter and slides HIS POLAROID of Hope across the counter.

LUCKY
Anne, you seen a gal come in here?
About 5'9. Blue eyes. Reads like
trouble if ya look past the blonde.

Nick suddenly perks up on his stool -- he begins to listen.

ANNE
(re: photo)
Now that's a catch. She yours?

LUCKY
Once or twice. Likes it rough.

NICK THE SAINT (O.S.)
Wait a second, Cassanova...
(grabbing the polaroid)
How do you know this girl?

LUCKY
What's it to you, chief?

NICK THE SAINT
Everything. I'm here to find her.
She has something that belongs to
someone who wants it sometime soon.

LUCKY
So you know this dame?

NICK THE SAINT
And she never likes it rough.

LUCKY
Look pal, finding this broad is my
case. And I got a lot ridin' on it.
Like my beatin' heart for starters.
So don't try bullyin' me around
'cause I ain't doin' your homework.

NICK THE SAINT
You say another word and I'll put
your beatin' heart out of its
misery.
(hard/cold)
What do you know about Hope?

LUCKY
Say, you got a name pal?

NICK THE SAINT
No. But I love killin' people who
got 'em. What's yours?

AND SUDDENLY - all the diner patrons go dead silent. Even the jukebox dies. It's like the entire place was just put on mute. Every ear listening to the distant sounds of...

AN ICE CREAM TRUCK

A playful jingle that would seem harmless if not heralding the presence of a killer. Each high-pitched note more deadly than the last. This is a cruel calling card.

ANNE
It's that lunatic ice cream
asshole. Loves free press.

Anne/Nick/Lucky turn to the window simultaneously.

LUCKY
He's 31 flavors of trouble. That
chocolate-chipped fuck.

ONE MOTHER in a corner booth grabs her children, holding them tight. Another WOMAN at the pie rack brings her OVERWEIGHT CHILD in close.

Lucky pockets his deck and lowers into a nearby booth. Other patrons follow his lead and drop out of sight, holding their breath in pure silence. That is, everyone but Nick...

He calmly sits at the bar finishing his root beer float -as-THE ICE CREAM TRUCK CREEPS PAST THE FRONT WINDOWS.

Anne slowly rises as the malicious tune trails off.

ANNE
He here for you, Nick?.

NICK THE SAINT
Think so.

Nick finishes the last drop of his float. He slides the mug across the bar -just as- the obese kid breaks from his mother's grasp and hauls ass out of the shop.

MOTHER
Oh my God - Tommy NO!!

Nick turns to the window and watches the kid chase down the ice cream truck. The vehicle screeches to a stop.

MOTHER
HELP! My baby! Somebody please help
my baby!

Anne gives Nick a look that says something like... "Get the fuck off your ass and help the kid".

Nick shakes his head in regret, grabs the crucifix dangling from his neck, and says the Cliff's Notes version of a prayer. He reaches for his gun -- but it's not there:

NICK THE SAINT
(to self -- realizing)
Harley. Damn she's good.

Now, Nick stands and turns to the counter.

NICK THE SAINT
Anne. You still servin' the special?

Anne smiles. She reaches under the counter and WHIPS OUT A POLISHED S&W .38 SPECIAL. Sleek. Custom "J" frame. Solid steel grips. She flips open the revolving cylinder.

ANNE

Trigger's been taken in. Quicker
than a jackrabbit on roller skates.
Bad thing is... I only got one
bullet.

She stands a single HOLLOW POINT on the counter. Nick
hesitates for the fraction of a second.

NICK THE SAINT
Add it to my bill.

Nick takes the bullet and flips the chamber. He watches it
spin in his grip, then slings the chamber back into socket.

NICK THE SAINT (CONT'D)
Fuckin' fat kid and his ice cream.

As he exits, Lucky slides over to the window and rips the
blinds apart in anticipation of this showdown.

INT. ICE CREAM TRUCK - **CONTINUOUS**

The window slowly opens as fat kid approaches. He bluntly
demands his order.

FAT KID
Rocky Road. Double scoop.

FROSTY eyes the child salaciously. White apron. Black bowtie.
Paper vendor hat angled on his forehead. If it wasn't for the
enormous scar down his cheek, he'd actually look the part.

ANGLE ON: THE FREEZER. A HALF-FROZEN CORPSE crammed in amidst
the tubs of ice cream. Frosty brushes a limb aside and digs
his scoop into the carton of Rocky Road.

He passes the ice cream through the window, just as...

NICK THE SAINT (O.S.)
HEY KID -- SCRAM!!!

Frosty comes to attention. His chapped lips curl into a
devilish smile. Here's the challenge he's been waiting for.

ANGLE ON: A SECOND FREEZER opens to reveal a styrofoam case
housing the dissembled parts of a TOMMY GUN.

EXT. FIASCO AVENUE - **CONTINUOUS**

A DROP OF SWEAT BREAKS ACROSS NICK'S TEMPLE.

WIND BLOWS - CLOUDS ROLL - THE TUNES OF AN ICE CREAM TRUCK

AND SUDDENLY, WE ZOOM INTO THE REAR DOORS OF THE TRUCK AS
THEY BURST OPEN IN FULL FUCKING FORCE!!!

RAT-TAT-TAT... Mr. Frosty comes out in a blaze. The TOMMY GUN spitting hot shells across the pavement. Muzzle flashing like lighting in the palm of his hand.

Nick runs for cover behind a battered CONTINENTAL -as- lead dances around him. Bullets everywhere! **POP** -- the tires explode! Hot ammo drilling into the automobile's frame.

Now, a pause... a momentary pause. The killer's weapon dispelling smoke into the atmosphere. He admires his work.

Nick staggers to his knee. Engine smoking over his left shoulder. Glass still trickling from above. This is gonna get worse and he damn well knows it.

ANGLE ON: THE FAT KID. Dazed. Startled by the commotion. His ice cream melting to the asphalt at his feet.

NICK THE SAINT
(signaling)
Kid! Move! Get outta the street!

Mr. Frosty grits his teeth and lets it rip. The neighborhood goes to hell! Bullets whizzing in every direction. Fragments of brick and mortar come together in mid-air chaos.

Frosty laughs... chime of the ice cream truck still ringing, taunting, as all other noise falls away. Store fronts being dismantled by the utensil of a hardened lunatic. The sinister jingle bringing a sense of art to his destructive handiwork.

Fat kid starts crying as the piercing noise of each bullet strikes closer than the last. He's paralyzed with fear...

But, NICK MAKES HIS MOVE. He sprints across the intersection and grabs the boy by the collar. Lifting him, he swings the kid under his arm and dives behind a black '37 FORD... a trail of ammo sparking at his heels.

Another pause. The ice cream man is ready to reload -but- Nick doesn't hesitate for one fuckin' second. He jumps from the steaming car, aims the .38 special, AND...

BAM!

THE SHOT ECHOES...

A PAPER ICE CREAM HAT FLOATS IN THE WIND...

THE GLEE JINGLE CONTINUES TO CHIME as...

THE ICE CREAM MAN DROPS TO HIS KNEES. His head sinks - a fresh wound smoking within it. Blood begins trickling down his white apron as he falls. HARD.

Local kids pour onto the street -- it's utter shock. All witnesses to the death of a childhood landmark, the ice cream man face down in a puddle of blood.

The frantic mother bolts out of the coffee shop and embraces her child.

MOTHER
Oh, baby! You're safe! My baby!

Nick slips the "special" into his waistline. Barrel still sizzling - smoke surging in his face. He strikes a stoic pose and SIGNS THE CROSS, overcoat flowing in the wind.

A SINGLE CAMERA BULB FLASHES.

He makes his way through the commotion unperturbed. An undaunted killer, unassuming savior.

THEN - A SERIES OF BULBS FLASHING. This is tomorrow's headline... but Nick doesn't care. He just presses forward, out of sight.

BACK INSIDE THE SODA SHOP

Lucky turns to Anne with astonishment on his face.

LUCKY
Un-be-fuckin'-lieveable. That's raw talent in the flesh!!

Lucky instantly rushes out of the diner in pursuit of Nick.

INT. FIASCO AVENUE - CONTINUOUS

Nick angles his Fedora, flips his collar. Hands are shaking. Here's where we can see the shaken nerves after his gunfight.

And without anticipation...

LUCKY (O.S.)
I can help ya find the girl.

Nick rips "the special" from his belt and spins to find... LUCKY DOYLE holding up THE POLAROID from the diner.

LUCKY
Spotted her at a bare knuckle brawl couple nights back.

Nick steadies the gun.

NICK THE SAINT
You again! Who the hell are you!?

LUCKY
The name's Doyle. Lucky Doyle.

NICK THE SAINT
I've heard of ya. You're that PI who never closed a case, right?

LUCKY

You kiddin' me? One more solved gig
and I get my own stationary.

In a flash, Nick grabs Lucky by the collar and throws him face first against a window -- gun firm to the back of his head.

NICK THE SAINT

I hope you ain't prone to bullshit.

LUCKY

It's no fib! I seen her at that
fight - she was arm n' arm with
some mysterious figure.

NICK THE SAINT

Did you get a face?

LUCKY

No. Hence the "mysterious" figure.
(beat)

Look. If I saw him again, I'd be
able to slip the tags on. I never
forget a healthy physique.

Nick lets Lucky go, but still keeps the "empty" gun trained.

NICK THE SAINT

Let's not chit-chat out here. These
streets like to spill secrets.
Follow me.

INT. FIASCO HOTEL - **MOMENTS LATER**

Nick enters his disheveled room. Choppy bits of neon spilling through the blinds, as the slow twirl of a ceiling fan cuts the shadows perfectly. Taking a pull from a bottle of whiskey:

NICK THE SAINT

Who sent you?

LUCKY

Nobody sent me. Just thought we
could help each other since we're
both bobbin' for the same broad. We
could swap 411... team up.

NICK THE SAINT

Team up? So there's a deal at the
bottom of your glass?

LUCKY

Of course. That's why I always keep
it half empty.

(beat)

I can come up with the girl
guaranteed. I'll just strap on my
gumshoes, twirl a few moustaches,
and whalla... luck be a lady.

(MORE)

LUCKY (cont'd)

See, missin' dames are my bread and butter. And the fact I got her digits, her license plate digits that is, don't hurt the case. She rides in a "royal flush". 10-King-Queen-Jack-Ace. It's pie.

NICK THE SAINT

Why do I feel like you're selling used lemonade?
(beat)

What do you want?

Lucky smiles -- pearly whites in full glow.

LUCKY

I owe The Catholics fives stacks of high society, but if I find the babe my debt's a kosher sandwich. They gave me 24 ticks to come up shinin', so I need to finger this gal... no pun intended. You keep me alive until I can say "payback", I'll be your private dick to brush the streets with. We both win here.

NICK THE SAINT

Catholics put out a trinity yet?

LUCKY

That's the pickle. I got a threesome lookin' to baptize me in the bay. The God Squad.

NICK THE SAINT

So, remind me why I need you again?

LUCKY

Well. I hear ya been gone for a while, and I know this place like the back of my balls. With my connections, we'll bag this broad by bedtime. But if you keep goin' around knockin' heads like ya do, we won't get nine yards from jack shit over easy. YOU NEED ME. I know who's who and where's where. That's the what's what of it.

(beat)

Whatdaya say? You in?

Nick thinks for a second. Another swig. More thought. Then:

NICK THE SAINT

You'll need to sign a CT-17.
(off blank stare)

A contract. Just so I'm not liable if... ya know... you die. I'll stiff arm the wrath of God as long as your shufflin' the right cards. Once we find the girl we'll talk agenda.

Now, Nick notices Lucky's bruised face. A speck of blood runs off of his cheek and trickles onto the carpet.

NICK THE SAINT
Would you mind not bleeding on the rug?

LUCKY
Oh yeah. Sure.
(steps aside)
It is a nice rug. Is it Persian?

NICK THE SAINT
Yes. I won it at the camel races right after I fucked my genie on a magic carpet. No you idiot, it's not Persian! There's a security deposit on the room. That's all.
(beat)
Don't be a numbnuts, or I'll dial 411 on my own.

Nick grabs a towel from the bathroom door

NICK THE SAINT
Here. Freshen up, tinkerbell.

Nick tosses it over. Lucky dabs his wound, hands trembling.

LUCKY
I can't believe you were gonna shoot me back there. That was traumatic.

NICK THE SAINT
I kill people for a living. Were you expecting a handshake and a warm pat on the ass?
(a beat)
Besides, I didn't do it.

LUCKY
You're a real sweetheart.

NICK THE SAINT
Yet.

Nick opens a sock drawer that's fully stocked with ammo. He removes a DESSERT EAGLE, tucking it under the pillow of his bed. Then he reloads "The Special" and holsters it along with his Glock 31. Finally, he opens the snack bar and retrieves TWO SMALL DETONATOR devices -- hi-tech looking shit.

Lucky just watches.

NICK THE SAINT
Now that we've had our meet-cute, there are just a few things I'll need to go over.
(ADD)
I'm famished. Do you like Thai?

INT. ELEVATOR - DAY - CONTINUOUS

Nick and Lucky enter the elevator as the doors open. Nick pushes the ground floor button...

NICK THE SAINT
You have 24 hours to come up with
the girl... right?

LUCKY
Right.

NICK THE SAINT
Wrong. You have 21 hours. I break
for breakfast, lunch and dinner.
During those times, we're off the
case.

The doors shut.

EXT. HOTEL PARKING - DAY - CONTINUOUS

Nick and Lucky walking out of the hotel...

NICK THE SAINT
I don't like too much attention, so
you'll have to be invisible while
I'm here. Translation: just keep
your ugly mug off the streets until
we're done solving this puzzle.
(he stops at valet)
I don't drive. Get us a cab.

INT. RANDOM CAB - DAY - CONTINUOUS

Nick and Lucky in the back seat...

NICK THE SAINT
For the most part, you are an
amateur. I'm the professional. That
means I'll be the only one dealing
with guns, knives and other things
that kill people. Turn here.

INT. RESTAURANT LOBBY - DAY - CONTINUOUS

Nick and Lucky enter the lobby of a busy Thai restaurant.
They approach the hostess...

NICK THE SAINT
Never, and by that I mean never,
tell anyone that our hips are
joined. It's called trust. And if
you break that trust, our deal goes
null and I walk.
(MORE)

NICK THE SAINT (cont'd)

(to hostess)

Hi. Table for two please.

INT. RESTAURANT BOOTH - DAY - CONTINUOUS

Nick slurps up a noodle from his Pad Thai platter...

NICK THE SAINT

If I take a bullet for you, which I'd rather not do under our current agreement, I'll have to charge a small fee. Pain & grievances.

Lucky forces a smile and sips some green tea. His expression says everything..."THE FUCK? I just hired Tony Montana to watch my back".

NICK THE SAINT

So. Are you good with the terms?

LUCKY

I can live with the terms.

NICK THE SAINT

Good. Then our "stakes" are on the same plate until we find the gal.

LUCKY

Okay. So. Isn't there a contract I needed to sign? A... CT17... or whatever?

NICK THE SAINT

Nah. It's all verbal. We're good.
(beat)

Are you gonna finish your spring roll?

Lucky looks a little perplexed as Nick scoops the last remaining spring roll from his plate.

LUCKY

Just wondering. Why do they call you "The Saint"? There're rumors that you're trained by thieves, protected by God...

NICK THE SAINT

And on Sundays, I walk on water between the hours of 2 and 4.

(now deadpan)

Don't believe everything you hear. Maybe for someone who kills people, I'm just a really nice fuckin' guy.

LUCKY

Maybe. But you ain't some chump with an itchy finger. That I know. And folks say ya've never killed anyone who didn't have it coming.

NICK THE SAINT
Stop. You're making me blush.
(to passing waitress)
Can you bring him the check please?

Lucky reaches for his wallet as Nick lights up a fresh smoke.

LUCKY
So. Ya got any leads?

NICK THE SAINT
A very dead source told me that
Sweats Polino can point fingers.
You know where we can find 'im?

LUCKY
That greasy fuck, sure. He works
out of a pawn shop on Grand.
(beat)
Say, what's with all the heat on
this piece a' patch anyhow?

NICK THE SAINT
Her name is Hope. And she has
something considerably valuable
with her. Something everyone is
gonna want to get their mitts on.

WHIP PAN TO:

EXT. INDIAN GIVER PAWN SHOP - **MOMENTS LATER**

Lucky is standing outside the front door of a small pawn shop. He smiles at passersby, trying to distract them from the mass pandemonium echoing from inside.

INT. INDIAN GIVER PAWN SHOP - **CONTINUOUS**

WHACK! NICK bitch-slaps a repulsive pawn shop broker across the face with a violin. Three strings pop on impact.

The broker falls backward holding his face. He's a greasy slimebag, ratty hair. Face scarred from years of acne. And he is almost IDENTICAL TO FLASK. Meet twin brother... SWEATS POLINO. Definitely the uglier of the two.

SWEATS
(with a slight lisp)
Doughboy's gonna thit thinder
blocks when he hearth about thith!
You're as dead as the screws in
your coffin, Nick.
(cough)
It really pithed him off when you
tried to jump town without thaying
goodbye. That was jush fuckin' rude.

NICK THE SAINT

Where's the girl, Sweats? I know
she's here. Your brother told me
you've seen her.

SWEATS

Theen her? Who do ya think took
that picture everyone's pathing
around?

(changing tone)

Doughboy ith the most powerful
bossth in Fiasco now. The top dog.
And he's gonna gut ya wide open!

NICK THE SAINT

Tell the fat lady he sings too loud
and too often.

(hard beat)

I left because I wanted out. Plain.
Simple. And non-negotiable.

Sweats struggles to a knee and wipes his greasy forehead.

SWEATS

That's what you think. We ain't
some gang bang operation pushin' 8
balls at rethess anymore. It's big
time now. We're turning over more
coke, more heroine, and more thmiles
than a fuckin' happy meal. So, you
have no idea the thower of thit
you're dancing in by whackin' on a
made guy with an antique violin. I'm
a big shot in thith town!!

WHAM! Nick splinters the violin across Sweats' face.

NICK THE SAINT

And I bet you can make pussy wet
just by winkin' at it.

(focused)

Where is she? Where's Hope?

SWEATS

(laughing)

Hope? You really care about that
glossed up dame? YOU'RE. THO.
FUCKED. <cough><cough> And your
little valentine's gonna get fucked
right alongthide ya.

(cough-cough)

She's playing ya, Saint. Like a
puppet on chain-link wires.

Blood begins pouring down Sweats' nose. Nick tosses him a
handkerchief from a glass counter nearby.

NICK THE SAINT

Here... you're leakin', Sweats. I
think I busted a pipe or two.

(beat)

(MORE)

NICK THE SAINT (cont'd)

And while I've got your attention,
I have a message for Doughboy.

SWEATS

Yeah, what's that?

Nick removes a SILENCED SIG-SAUER and aims smack between the eyes.... **SPHIT! SPHIT! SPHIT!** Blood peppers the mirrors.

Hearing the noise, Lucky pokes his head inside to find Nick signing the cross over Sweats' dead corpse. And... he quickly shuts the door. Acts like he didn't see a thing.

INT. LIP LOUNGE KARAOKE CLUB - **MOMENTS LATER**

The nightclub is dimly lit. An Italian joint lined with red leather booths and musical motifs. Rich cigar smoke actuates the air softening the mood to a smooth shade of gray.

On the stage, your typical "broad in a night club" sings and tosses a few winks to her crowd. She wears a white gown, fits like a glove -but- more glitter than glamour.

Now, we slowly pull back to reveal the singer reading her words from a cue. Vacant piano - no musicians on stage. And we realize, she's singing karaoke... with a splash of noir.

She delivers an enticing smile to some poor sap in the front row (guy's wife probably has dinner wrapped in the fridge by now) then turns, winks, and blows a kiss right to the camera.

CAMERA HURLS BACK TO THE BAR where Nick and Lucky chip at their cocktails like programmed alcoholics. They're surrounded by Italian greasers in yarmulkes. This is obviously wiseguy territory.

LUCKY

I bet she's lip syncing.

NICK THE SAINT

Why are you trying to bet me? Were you raised under a power line?

LUCKY

Definitely lippling.

NICK THE SAINT

Just stop talking, stop thinking, and stop fucking existing until I finish my drink. Please.

Nick turns his gaze to the lustrous lounge singer. He stares, and it only takes her a second to notice.

TENDER SAL (O.S.)

Blink your headlights, Nick. That vixen has a leash on her.

TENDER SAL (BARTENDER) nods to a corner booth, where we find PAT McBANISTER -SCORPION TATTOO ON HIS NECK- giving Nick some attention of his own. He's flashy. Stylish. A celebrity as far as gangsters go. And PS... he's a bonafide prick.

He winks at Nick and makes a pumping motion with his fist. As in... "Yeah. I'm fuckin' her".

Nick smiles vehemently and signals for two drinks.

TENDER SAL
 I seen that look before, and it
 usually means I gotta mop my floors
 in the morning.
 (pouring)
 Just play nice would ya, Nick? He's
 a heavy roller now. You don't wanna
 reputation for puttin' out the
 wrong stars.

NICK THE SAINT
 Stars are meant for shooting, Sal.
 That's how ya wish on 'em.

Nick grabs the drinks and turns to Lucky.

NICK THE SAINT
 You. Stay.

AT McBANISTER'S BOOTH

Nick drops in opposite McBanister. We can tell there's a rivalry here. Question is whether it's friendly or not.

MCBANISTER
 Welcome back, Nick. Mind if you
 join me?

NICK THE SAINT
 Not yet anyway.

Nick slides the fresh cocktail across the table.

MCBANISTER
 I quit.

NICK THE SAINT
 So we'll drink to old habits. Or
 was it only the hard stuff that set
 your gun off?

MCBANISTER
 You're just jealous because I had
 all the good gigs. I'm on contract
 with The Catholics now, see. Part
 time. Great benefits. A 401k.

Nick lights up a fresh smoke.

NICK THE SAINT

Sorry to hear that. Thought they
had enough choirboys to fondle.

MCBANISTER

Cute. Very cute.

McBanister laughs it off and nods to the girl on stage.

MCBANISTER

So whatdya think of my new
squeeze? They just don't make
trophies like that anymore, eh? Too
many curves.

Nick puts on a generic smile.

NICK THE SAINT

Yeah. I'm lookin' for a girl
myself. Seen her?

Nick slides Lucky's polaroid of Hope across the table.

MCBANISTER

Why you askin' about this dame?

NICK THE SAINT

Curiosity. I hear it killed a cat
once.

MCBANISTER

And it'll kill you too if ya keep
on with the questions.

(beat)

There's too many gals to shake at
in this cum dump city. Try the lost
n' found... maybe she'll turn up.

McBanister starts to get edgy as his lady wraps her set. It's
easy to see he's hiding something.

MCBANISTER (CONT'D)

Why ya really here, Nick? What for?

NICK THE SAINT

Good reason. Bad intention. Maybe a
mix of the two?

(beat)

Her name's Hope. Just a gal who got
tossed in the wrong drink with the
wrong folks. Now she's thin air
with no tracks to follow. Faded out
with something of high value --
something my current employers want
back.

(beat)

You and me got history... it's the
only reason I'm asking.

MCBANISTER

(cold)

I said I ain't seen her.

(colder)

But while there's history on the table, I should probly let ya know that "The Mormon" was released.

NICK THE SAINT

He's out?

MCBANISTER

Good behavior. Turned his last parole hearing into some PSA for that latter day bullshit. Not to mention, he had a wife on the committee. Those bitches are everywhere.

Curtains fall as the stage crew resets for the next act.

MCBANISTER

He's workin' for Doughboy again.

(cheshire grin)

See, I'd stiff ya myself -- but I'm givin' ya the night off. Only since I know he'll be lookin' for old scores to polish up on.

NICK THE SAINT

Thanks for the clemency, it plays real genuine. Must be all the clergy they got ya hummin' on.

McBanister opens his jacket enough to reveal the P.08 LUGER holstered inside. He shakes his head.

MCBANISTER

Speakin' of all that, I stopped to see your old gal Harley while you were out. She's good company. Still partin' those legs like the Red fuckin' Sea.

Nick LUNGEs across the table -BUT- McBanister already has the Luger trained in his face. He's clearly touched a nerve.

MCBANISTER

I know. It's not nice to point. And I'm usually one for manners, but you're still crazy like a gypsy fuck, man.

(beat)

Now. Are we done catchin' up on times of ole?

Nick tries to make a move -BUT NOW- every Italian in the bar whips out a gun and points in his direction.

NICK THE SAINT

Looks that way. For now.

MCBANISTER
 Then scram, before I cause a
 ruckus.
 (nodding to Lucky)
 And take your pet loser with ya.

Nick holsters the gun he had poised under the table --
 McBanister lays down his Luger as well. It could have been a
 tie, but we'll never know. Then...

Two doormen roughly escort Nick/Lucky from the club.

LUCKY
 (to Nick)
 When you get sick of the four star
 treatment, let's try things my way.

INSERT INVESTIGATION MONTAGE

SHOT: Nick/Lucky show the pic to a garbage man. It's a "No".

SHOT: Lucky talks to an albino gang at a pool hall. "No".

SHOT: At a pharmacy. The tattooed pharmacist shakes "No".

SHOT: Flashing the pic to a biker gang at a dive bar. "No".

SHOT: Interrogating some poor junkie at an AA meeting. "No".

EXT. BLACK MARKETPLACE - DUSK - "1 HOUR LATER"

Welcome to the black market. A street bazaar so big it makes K-mart look like a garage sale. Anything can be purchased here for a price: Arms, drugs, illegal immigrants. Anything.

We PAN through the masses to find our guys. Lucky is shaking hands with the PERSIAN OWNER of a small flower kiosk. But the slant is... there are no flowers here. Just a smorgasbord of illegal horticulture.

This boutique is brimming with coca plants, mushrooms, and all the marijuana you can imagine. Winter Koning. White Widow. B-52. Northern Lights. All labeled appropriately in a mom & pop organization that could make the FDA shit bricks.

Lucky shows the owner HOPE'S PHOTO, but Persian shakes a negative and takes another hit of the Chef's special. Now, Lucky changes angles and leads us to a small newsstand nearby.

FRONTPAGE SAM quietly sits reading an issue of *LIFE MAGAZINE*.

LUCKY
 Frontpage Sam. What's the news?

FRONTPAGE SAM
 Lucky! It's been a few days. You
 come lookin' for the scores again?

LUCKY

Not this time, Sam. I'm gettin'
outta the number business. Direct
orders from God.

FRONTPAGE SAM

Yeah, I heard he had an eye on you.
So that being the case -- I'll keep
the news to myself.

Sam flips over the SPORTS SECTION of the most recent paper.

LUCKY

Thanks. I actually came for
somethin' else...

Lucky whips out a tattered napkin with digits scribbled
across it. Nick watches curiously over his shoulder.

LUCKY

...These digits belong to a license
plate. I need to know whose. Can ya
play it for me, Sam?

FRONTPAGE SAM

Yeah, I can play it. I'll flip ya
the fresh headline in fifty ticks
to an hour.

LUCKY

You're a gem. A diamond in the
rough without the diamond.

FRONTPAGE SAM

(smiles)

Let's just hope you're outta that
slump next time I see ya. Get ya
swingin' for the fences again.

LUCKY

And that's what got me in the slump
to begin with.

Lucky winks to his old friend and turns away with Nick. And
as they walk, we'll pass through a small construction zone --
about 10 PUERTO RICANS paving a sidewalk with fresh cement.

LUCKY

(to Nick)

See. Easy as watchin' tits shake.

NICK THE SAINT

Well. If you're comparing the miracle
of shaking tits to spending time with
you, I'd much prefer the tits 10 to 1.
Although, a case can be made that you
are in fact an enormous boob. With an
astoundingly profane vocabulary.

LUCKY

More like vulgarly eloquent.

NICK THE SAINT
You wouldn't know eloquent if they
fed you pages from a dictionary.

LUCKY
Wait. So, you're just a rotten son
of a bitch, aren't you?

SUDDENLY, Nick has a gun to his head. AND NOW, Lucky does
too. All 10 "ARMED" CONSTRUCTION WORKERS surrounding them.
NICK THE SAINT LUCKY
Fuck. Fuck.

Nick PUTS A HAND ON THE CEMENT TRUCK as the Puerto Ricans
force him over the wet concrete, leading him further down the
alley. And what we'll notice... is that he has casually left
one of his SMALL BLINKING DEVICES on the churning truck.

PUERTO RICAN
Usted dado que coge, gatito!

NICK THE SAINT
Sorry, I don't speak French.

THE MORMON (O.S.)
(very articulate)
I believe that he said you're about
to die. With lots of profanities
sprinkled in for good measure.

Nick looks up to see MICK THE MORMON approaching out of the
darkness. And we can see the meaning of the word "NEMESIS"
just by the hatred sparkling in his glare.

THE MORMON
Welcome back, partner. Or, I guess ex-
partner is more politically correct.
I was never really one for details.

NICK THE SAINT
Details like stabbing a friend in
the back. You mean "actual" details
like that, right Mormon?

LUCKY
(whispers)
Mormon? That's Mick The Mormon?

Mormon steps into Nick's personal space, pops a stick of
bubblegum in his mouth and blows a **HUGE** bubble.

THE MORMON
You've got a sack of brass coming
back here, Nicky. But that big
swingin' dick always draws a crowd.

Mormon lifts up an issue of the *FIASCO TIMES* evening edition -
- a picture of NICK'S SHOWDOWN AT THE DINER covers page one.
HEADLINE READS: "THE SECOND COMING: SAINT RETURNS".

THE MORMON (CONT'D)
 But I'm not here for reunions, so
 I'll make this short and painful.
 You don't get out of Fiasco
 Heights, Nick. You die here, and
 your soul dies here with you.

Nick tries to make a move, but the Puerto Rican Workers click their hammers.

THE MORMON
 Careful now! We got a real life
 Mexican stand-off here, aye Nick?
 (off Nick's reserve)
 C'mon. Where's your sense of humor?

NICK THE SAINT
 Never heard of him.

The Mormon begins screwing a silencer onto his pistol.

THE MORMON
 Thing is, you can't quit "The
 Franchise" whenever ya want. It's a
 syndicate, not a fuckin' temp agency.
 Ain't no paid vacations in our line
 of work, Saint Nick.
 (beat)
 You know what a "mandate" is?

NICK THE SAINT
 Other than a noun, it's the last
 thing you'll say before I kill
 everyone here holding a gun.

THE MORMON
 Don't be silly - look around. You don't
 have a spic's chance. Literally. And
 they've got hedges to trim in the
 morning, so let's expedite this thing.

NICK THE SAINT
 10 seconds.

THE MORMON
 Mandate. "An authoritative command
 handed down from the most supreme..."

BEEP.... BEEP... BEEP...

And, The Mormon turns to the cement truck just as...

KA-BLOOOM! A WAVE OF WET CEMENT BLOWS ACROSS THE SCENE!

Nick grabs Lucky and ducks behind a pile-on as cement erupts overhead with tsunami force. Glass shatters... metal debris flies overhead... car alarms sounding off everywhere.

Drops of cement rain down like snow flurries as the chaos settles. And that's exactly when...

Nick grabs the gun from his belt and rises to find 10 PUERTO RICANS molded into place by a ton of wet concrete. NONE OF THEM CAN DODGE FAST ENOUGH, moving in slow motion.

BAM. BAM. BAM. Nick goes around the scene, putting a fresh bullet in each man with a gun. It's the easiest round of target practice anyone's ever taken aim to.

He stops. Each victim slumped in a coat of drying cement, like salt pillars streaked in blood. But THE MORMON is gone.

LUCKY
Tickle my ass - that was gravy!!

NICK THE SAINT
Shut-up and follow me. These are only the early birds...

Nick takes off his "wet" overcoat - it clanks to the ground with a THUD. He grabs Lucky's arm and pulls him along.

NICK THE SAINT (CONT'D)
They always travel in packs.

And on the period of that sentence - MACHINE GUNS ECHO!!!

LUCKY
Sounds about right!

Nick and Lucky race back into THE BLACK MARKETPLACE, a poker table goes over as they begin tumbling through a series of booths to make their escape. A HOARD OF GUNMEN BEHIND THEM.

BOOTH > AFTER BOOTH > AFTER BOOTH > AFTER BOOTH > AFTER BOOTH

Finally, they plow through an assemblage of Arabs admiring the newest dirty-bomb prototypes... and into safe passage.

EXT. FIASCO BOULEVARD - **CONTINUOUS**

Once on the street, Lucky hunches over to catch his breath.

LUCKY
I swear, I'm coming. One sec.

Nick turns to his pathetic partner.

NICK THE SAINT
No stopping!

AND LUCKY VOMITS. Everywhere. The pink kind of vomit that says your lungs haven't seen exercise in years.

NICK THE SAINT
Tell me you're fucking joking.
(re: puking)
Just lemme know when we can get back to RUNNING FOR OUR LIVES!!

Lucky looks up with tear filled eyes, takes a deep breath. Then pukes up another batch. Round two.

NICK THE SAINT
Oh Jesus. I don't believe this.

LUCKY
Okay - I think I'm good.

Nick and Lucky bolt across the street free and clear. Well, for at least a second or two -- or however long it took for those **THREE FORD MODEL A TUDORS** TO SCREAM AROUND THE CORNER!

Lucky jumps forward as rapid fire clicks at his heel. In the near distance, Nick finds our getaway. It's coming right for us. It's...

THE FIASCO HEIGHTS EXPRESS

But it's not your average metro. No. This public transportation method should come with a warning label. It's built on an elevated train rail -however- the passenger car hangs vertically from the track, suspending over the ground.

Nick hops onto the panel and lifts Lucky into this trolley-esque rail car. A supped up TUDOR only a few yards behind.

Lucky pans the car... ENTIRE THING IS PACKED WITH SENIOR CITIZENS. Obvious tourists on leave from the retirement home. Cameras begin clicking, each tourist wears a sweatshirt that says, "I SURVIVED FIASCO HEIGHTS".

LUCKY
Yes. Let's think positive.

Their TOUR GUIDE drops his mic and ducks for cover as...

RAT-TAT-TAT-TAT-TAT. Fresh ammunition dances across the exterior sending the tourists into a frenzy.

"VRROOM" - ALL THREE TUDORS ARE CLOSING IN FROM BEHIND.

Nick grabs a hand bar and leans off the open rail, unloading hell into the first vehicle. No luck. Time to focus. He steadies -- finger taught on the trigger -- and fires...

CRACK! Direct hit! The bullet pierces the windshield, sending the driver's head off like a pinata. Tudor spins out of control - tires giving way - and flips into pure bedlam.

Nick smiles as the tudor continues to mash across the asphalt. THE HOOD BLOWS. ENGINE IGNITES. **BOOOOOOM!**

ONE TOURIST **SNAPS A PICTURE**. He wears hearing aids -- thinks it's all part of the tour. Next...

TUDOR #2 speeds up on the right, getting even with the passengers, while TUDOR #3 speeds up on the left. WE'RE FLANKED! But Nick steps into the middle of the car, aiming his guns in opposite directions... and goes to work.

One round in, TUDOR #2 peels from its lane and SLAMS HEAD-ON INTO AN ONCOMING FOURTEEN WHEELER. The collision sending a fireball the size of a boulder into the rear of our ride.

The force alone rips us from the raised line and jars our small car right off its rails. Live electricity spews from an overhead conduit as the express slams to the ground, free-wheeling down the hilly streets of central Fiasco.

BAM! GUNFIRE CONTINUES RAGING FROM THE ROGUE METRO. BAM!

TUDOR #3 pulls back and falls in behind us. A MARKSMAN stepping onto the exterior floor panel with a readied TOMMY GUN in his grasp. HE LETS IT RIP!

Nick holds firm as bullets graze his head. He isn't dodging them, merely being thrown from their path as the rail car veers right, then left, then right again.

No more games. Saint edges around the front of the vehicle taking a "hail mary" shot that blows the Marksman's hat off. Just happens most of his head is still in it.

TUDOR #3 swerves violently, then regains control.

TOUR GUIDE (O.S.)
END OF THE ROAD!

Nick turns to discover the runaway express speeding towards...

HANGMAN'S PARK

HE SIGNS THE CROSS...

EXT. HANGMAN'S PARK - **CONTINUOUS**

A quiet setting. Cobblestone bridge stretching across a steep decline filled with pine and cedar. White-capped moss swaying within the rock of a sarconic arch.

We pan up to a wooden sign - **HANGMAN'S PARK** - which instantly SPLINTERS TO PIECES as our metro explodes over the cobblestone breaking 100.

RAIL CAR NOSEDIVES THROUGH THE TREES AS WE WHIP DOWNHILL. And you can bet your ass there's been a heart attack by now.

SMASH! The vehicle ping-pongs between two oak trees and slams through a gazebo. Inertia hits like a crushing stab in the back as the car lifts into the air, sailing forward...

...And drives back into the earth. Nick holds his composure and fires at the pursuing Tudor. Screams from every angle.

NICK'S POV ON: A REAR BREAK LINE HANGING FROM THE EXIT PANEL. Nick pushes to the back, velocity working against him as the trolley goes red on the speedometer.

AND WE'RE COMING TO A BODY OF WATER. HANGMAN'S POND. It's growing on us like we're free falling through the trees.

PICKING UP MORE SPEED NOW! 110. 112. 114.

Nick pulls himself to the rear cabin - impact no more than 40 yards away. He reaches for the break line... THIN EMERGENCY WIRE DANGLING FROM THE EXIT PANEL. Almost got it.

WE'RE PLOWING OVER SMALL PINES. FASTER. FASTER. FASTER...

Suddenly, TUDOR #3 slams into the rear of the car, knocking Nick over the rail and onto the Tudor's hood. He latches onto the front grill, tilting his gun over the hood. And Nick puts a FULL CLIP THROUGH THE WINDSHIELD -- brain matter splashing the windows. But then...

Saint immediately drops from the grill, lands on his back, and puts his chin to the dirt just as the Tudor *whips* right over top him. He safely rolls out from under it, as...

BOOOOOM! A ferocious explosion as the Tudor goes head on into an oak tree. Glass, wood and metal shards fill the air.

BACK ON LUCKY IN "THE EXPRESS"

Gritting his teeth as the we approach the pond. THIS BUNDLE OF RUNAWAY NOSTALGIA IS HEADED FOR A COLLISION. And here... it... comes...

ANGLE ON:

A FULL FRONTAL OF RAIL CAR -- seconds before it slams into the embankment FIRING LUCKY THROUGH THE WINDSHIELD like regurgitated food. He hits the water in a tremendous barrel roll, like a rock skipping across its glassy surface.

After a beat, a few of the passengers begin stumbling off the catastrophe. Minor cuts and bruises.

FAT OLD WOMAN
I want my five motherfuckin'
dollars back!

HEARING AID GUY
What?

Nick brushes some dirt from his jacket, turning to find Lucky UP TO HIS WAIST IN HANGMAN'S POND. Lucky spits out a mouthful of water and begins to shiver. As he sloshes onto the shore:

LUCKY
(teeth chattering)
D-d-don't shay a w-w-w-word.

And Lucky limps off through the park, agitated. Nick follows.

SLOW DISSOLVE TO:

INT. LUCKY'S OFFICE - NIGHT

If Sam Spade had a low rent storage space with one window, this would be it. Lucky sits in the corner with his feet in a tub of warm water, stacks of smut magazines surround him.

Nick walks to a small bookshelf beside him. Maybe a few classic Chandler books, a few pictures of CHILDHOOD LUCKY with his family -but then- a PICTURE OF LUCKY WITH A RACE HORSE. Next to it is a CARTON OF GLUE. Nick picks it up.

LUCKY (O.S.)
Don't touch that!

NICK THE SAINT
What? Why?

LUCKY
That's Lightning Suckerpunch.
Aka... lucky horse #5. He's the
only family I have.

NICK THE SAINT
Don't you mean had? And did you
ever think that betting on anything
in connection with the word
"suckerpunch" was a bad idea?

LUCKY
It was my father's horse. I swore
I'd look after him when he died.
After all, Lightning was part of
the family. But then I ran into
trouble, the kind with dollar signs
attached. So, I took Lightning to
the straights and won a few bucks.
Did good for a blink or two... but
then he hit a 13 race loosing
streak, broke his leg, and now he
holds furniture together.
(emotional beat)
As silly as it is... those are the
remains of a dear friend. So
please, hands off the glue.

NICK THE SAINT
Right. So it's official.

LUCKY
What?

NICK THE SAINT
You have down syndrome.

Nick sits in a wooden rocking chair. Off Lucky's sorrow:

NICK THE SAINT (CONT'D)
Okay, I'm sorry, that was
completely insensitive.
(MORE)

NICK THE SAINT (cont'd)
 (taps the wooden chair)
 He's one tough fella.

Lucky gets up and pockets the glue.

LUCKY
 And sometimes I carry him with
 me... just for luck.

OFF SCREEN: A KNOCK AT THE DOOR. Lucky answers to find a "familiar" newsboy standing outside with a fresh paper.

NEWSBOY
 Special delivery for Mr. Doyle.

LUCKY
 That's me.

Lucky opens the paper to reveal an insert with the license plate information printed on it.

LUCKY
 We've got the plates!
 (reading)
 Says they're registered to your
 pal, McBanister.

Shock falls over Nick's face... just for a second. Then it's replaced by 100% pissed-off rage & fury.

NICK THE SAINT
 C'mon, let's move!

Nick pulls DELI'S CARD from his pocket, and...

"DING" -- A "TAXI" SIGN FLICKERS TO LIFE.

SMASH CUT TO:

INT. TAXI CAB - **"APPROXIMATELY 1 MINUTE LATER"**

SCREEEECH! THE TAXI CAB RIPS AROUND A CORNER GOING 75mph.

DELI
 Where to, friend?

NICK THE SAINT
 The Suburbs.

DELI
 The burbs? That's a dangerous slice
 of neighborhood. Why are we jumping
 the tracks?

NICK THE SAINT
 I think we found my girl.
 (re: traffic)
 Red means go.

CAB BLOWS THROUGH A RED LIGHT AS CARS SWERVE TO AVOID IT.

Lucky fastens his seatbelt...

LUCKY

Okay, so who's tryin' to kill ya?
Because now, and this is just my
assumption here, but I'm pretty
sure they'll wanna kill me too.

NICK THE SAINT

It's the outfit I used to work for.
"The Franchise".

CAB HUGS A SHARP RIGHT AND JETS ACROSS 8TH & SPEIGHT.

LUCKY

Doughboy, Mick the fuckin' Mormon...
Christ! We're in the big leagues of
hurt and I'm just a minor player.

(beat)

What'd you do to piss 'em off?

CAB ROCKETS OVER A HILLY INCLINE - SPARKS FLY UPON TOUCHDOWN.

NICK THE SAINT

I refused an offer I couldn't
refuse. A lifetime contract.

Nick leans forward to Deliconte...

NICK THE SAINT

Faster Deli!

**CAB CUTS ACROSS LANES - POPS A CURB - AND RACES THROUGH A
SMALL PLAYGROUND WHERE CHILDREN HANG FROM A JUNGLE GYM.**

**VROOOOM. CAB RIPS OFF THE OPPOSITE CURB AND DIVES ONTO AN
INTERSECTING STREET.**

Nick looks nervous for a second - buckles his seat belt too.

NICK THE SAINT

Don't worry about The Franchise.
That's my problem.

DELI (O.S.)

Hang on!

CAB TEARS ACROSS THE MEDIAN AND CUTS THROUGH ONE-WAY TRAFFIC.

LUCKY

Your problem? One thing's for
cherries, I got the raw end of this
shake.

Nick leans forward for a second time...

NICK THE SAINT

Deli, there's a shortcut off 6th.

CAB VEERS RIGHT AND WHIPS INTO A 60 DEGREE TURN. IT JUMPS THE TRACKS... AND WE'RE ALL SIDE STREETS FROM HERE.

NICK THE SAINT
That's the street - turn here!!

AND NOW... THE CAB SCREAMS TO A HAULT IN A HUGE CUL-DE-SAC!

EXT. MCBANISTER'S PLACE - THE SUBURBS - **CONTINUOUS**

It's the almost perfect neighborhood. Lemonade stands. Trimmed hedges. Picket fences on every corner. Just ignore the fact that it's all covered in graffiti. Gang turf.

Nick sprints toward McBanister's home. The gate is open - front door ajar. He pulls his gun and enters with caution.

INT. MCBANISTER'S PLACE - **CONTINUOUS**

The insides have been turned over. Every drawer, every shelf, every room has been ransacked.

NICK THE SAINT
Fuck me!

ANGLE ON: MCBANISTER'S BODY LYING ON THE LIVING ROOM FLOOR.

Nick kneels down in a pool of blood, lifts McBanister's head.

Soon, Lucky enters to discover A BODY GUARD hanging from a ceiling fan... corpse circling the room on a NOOSE.

LUCKY
Welcome to casa de "what the fuck's goin' on here"?!

McBanister coughs up some blood. He's been stabbed a few times in the chest, shredded like a bowl of coleslaw.

NICK THE SAINT
Where is she, Pat? Tell me!

McBanister can barely move his lips. He points to a bookshelf in the living room.

NICK THE SAINT
What? What is it...?

Nick tries to pinpoint what McBanister is aiming for.

NICK THE SAINT
I don't see... was the girl here,
Pat?
(pleading)
Did she have the case? Was she her?

McBanister nods his head, YES.

NICK THE SAINT
Where do I find her? Come on,
McBanister! Where?!?

McBanister starts to talk, but all we can hear is the gurgling of blood in his throat....

MCBANISTER
Find...the... safe.

NICK THE SAINT
What safe?

McBanister struggles.

NICK THE SAINT
What's inside it?

And on the few remaining breathes he has left:

MCBANISTER
Sa.. sa... sal...va...tion.

Blood trickles from McBanister's mouth for the last time.

LUCKY
Did he just say "salvation"?

Nick nods his head, then checks McBanister's pulse:

NICK THE SAINT
He's dead.

LUCKY
(re: churning guard)
Join the club. There's dead folks
decked all over the joint. This
one's a great centerpiece.

Nick signs the cross over McBanister's body. Final Respects and all that jazz. Then he closes McBanister's eyes, begins reciting a prayer.

LUCKY
Whatever they're lookin' for must
be valuable enough to kill that sap
and dig for gold spots.

Now, Lucky walks over to the bookshelf noticing a book out of place. A GIDEON BIBLE. He opens it to a bookmarked chapter, where we see the outline of a key cut right into pages.

NICK THE SAINT (O.S.)
Salvation.

LUCKY
And I presume we'd need a key to
find it. This "missing" key to be
specific -- someone already took it.

Nick grabs the small Bible, flipping through it. Then he stoops down to find something of interest. THE WORD "CLUE" pops over AN EMPTY KETCHUP PACKET like a VH-1 bubble.

Nick looks it over. Touches it to his tongue. Pockets it.

NICK THE SAINT
Ketchup.
(to Lucky)
Mystery's still the word, but as far as clues go, this one's a keeper.

LUCKY
It enough to play a lead?

NICK THE SAINT
McBanister used to be a freelance trigger in Doughboy's pocket.
Lately, he's been clockin' in for The Catholics. Total switch-hitter.
(thinking)
Between the two syndicates, there's either a power play in the works, or they're both after the same thing.

LUCKY
Your gal and her goody bag?

HOPE (O.S.)
Or just the goody bag.

Nicky/Lucky turn in unison to find HOPE CAUFIELD standing in the bedroom doorway. She's bruised, beaten, faint. Nick runs over to her just as she collapses into his arms.

NICK THE SAINT
Hope!?!?

HOPE
Right out of the past, isn't it?

NICK THE SAINT
Jesus, Hope, what happened?

HOPE
Got smacked around a bit. I'm usually one for free makeovers, but I don't think the black and blue matches my shoes.

Hope props herself against the wall.

NICK THE SAINT
What are you doing here?

HOPE
I was paying McBanister to help me find the case. "Salvation".
(serious)
(MORE)

HOPE (cont'd)

But they got it, Nick. They took
the key.

LUCKY

Who? Same folks that killed this
McBanister chum?

HOPE

Yes. The same bunch of brutes that
stormed through here and put me out
cold. Boy, they sure don't know how
to treat a lady these days.

LUCKY

Who's they?!?

NICK THE SAINT

Who's they?!?

HOPE

I ain't sure for sure. But who's
the tag-a-long, Nick?

LUCKY

Doyle. Lucky Doyle.

NICK THE SAINT

He's a sidekick slash PI slash
witness. Slash idiot.

HOPE

Gotcha. Face looks familiar.

SUDDENLY -- POLICE SIRENS SCREAM FROM THE DISTANCE!

Lucky rushes to the window as AN ENTIRE SQUAD OF POLICE CARS
SURROUND THE HOME. Each car has #52 painted on the hood.

LUCKY

We're patsy pot pie.

Nick pulls his pistol and peers out the window.

NICK THE SAINT

The 52nd. It's a set up.

(lowering blinds)

I'd back away from the window if I
were you. They're "criminal" with a
Capitol One -- entire precinct is
bankrolled by The Franchise.

LUCKY

So that means there's dirty bacon
on the menu?

CRACK. A WARNING SHOT RIPS THROUGH THE GLASS, PAST LUCKY.

NICK THE SAINT

Right. SO GET AWAY FROM THE WINDOW!

EXT. MCBANISTER'S CUL-DE-SAC - **CONTINUOUS**

Deli raises his arms as a few standard issue Berettas are thrown in his face.

DELI
Don't count me in. All I did was leave the meter running.

INT. MCBANISTER'S PLACE - **CONTINUOUS**

Nick adjusts his Fedora and takes the safety off his gun.

NICK THE SAINT
Way I pitch it, we're all swimmin' in the same hot water. Let's stick together and find that case.

CRASH -as- a GAS CANNISTER projects through the window, hovering between our leads in **SLOW MOTION** -- SKULL AND CROSSBONES spinning at it passes.

LUCKY
Okay. We've got gas!

BOOM...SPHISSS! The cannister destructs on impact. Lucky/Nick/Hope cover their mouths and stay below the smoke.

NOW - FOOTSTEPS ON THE ROOF. Hope grabs Nick's spare gun and fires into the ceiling. WE HEAR A BODY **THUD**, **SLIDE**, AND **DROP** PAST THE WINDOW. Both Nick and Lucky stare at her in awe.

HOPE
What? I had three brothers.
(moving to back door)
Not sure about you boys, but I don't look good in frames. Let's escort me out of here.

Nick tears open a breaker box on the wall and flips a fuse, killing the lights. Well, all of them except for THE **2ND** BLINKING PLASTIC DEVICE that he'll mold to the front door.

Now, Nick goes to the back of the house and peeks out the rear window. Quietly estimating the distance to an open garage in the distance... his guess is about fifty feet.

NICK THE SAINT
My guess is about 50 feet.
(to Lucky)
You ever wire a car?

INT. MCBANISTER'S GARAGE - **CONTINUOUS**

Lucky fiddles with the wires of A BLACK CADILLAC, and he's been doing it for about five minutes too long.

Finally, Hope pushes him aside and ignites the engine herself. She hops into the driver's seat. Nick and Lucky stare... again.

HOPE
(matter of fact)
My three brothers were mechanics.

LUCKY
(to Nick)
There's more to this broad than
lipstick and panty hose.

HOPE
Guys - get in! And buckle up, 'cause
this "broad" hugs a mean curve.

EXT. MCBANISTER'S PLACE - **CONTINUOUS**

O'TOOLE -RED HEAD COP- KICKS IN THE FRONT DOOR, ordering a platoon of blues into the pad. And what they'll never notice, is that the BLINKING DEVICE HAS STOPPED BLINKING. 3, 2, 1, and...

BOOOOOM! THE HOUSE GOES UP IN A BLAST OF BRICK AND SHINGLE. RED HEAD IS THROWN TO THE STREET, fire singeing his hair. Remnants of second hand furniture dropping from the sky like a used rain sale... one torn sofa smashes atop a patrol car.

And... **CRASH!** MCBANISTER'S CADILLAC shatters the garage door and reverses through the debris. Hope grits her teeth behind the wheel and plows over every picket fence in the neighborhood at full throttle, making for an amazing escape.

O'Toole jumps to his feet and signals to a deputy.

O'TOOLE
Get The Mormon -- tell him we have
a situation on the brew.

EXT. CEMETERY - FIASCO HEIGHTS - **NIGHT**

Camera whips across a cemetery the size of an airport tarmac. Mausoleums rising ten stories in the air, fresh graves all over the place. And past the crumbling statue of an archangel riddled with bullet holes, we'll see...

The Cadillac coming to a stop beside an enormous sanctuary.

EXT. OUR SHEPHERD OF PEACE - **CONTINUOUS**

Bats flutter through a broken stained-glass window as Nick pounds on the door.

NICK THE SAINT
Sanctuary!

LUCKY

Seriously, what are we doin' here?
I don't do religion past supper.

HOPE

He's right, Nick. This place really
puts a chill in my curls.

NICK THE SAINT

Sanctuary! Sanctuary!

And the door slowly opens revealing a short, bald monk in a velvet nightgown.

MONSEIGNEUR

Nick? Nick... is that you?

NICK THE SAINT

I'm back, Monseigneur. And I
brought a vendetta back with me.

(turns to Hope)

She needs sanctuary. And I need to
borrow some equipment.

INT. OUR SHEPHERD OF PEACE - **CONTINUOUS**

CLICK. The Monseigneur twists a SMALL CRUCIFIX beside the organ, lifting the BAPTISMAL WALL to reveal a floor-to-ceiling armory. If it kills people, you'll find it here.

MONSEIGNEUR

Take what you need, for there is
always favor in the hands of the
faithful.

NICK THE SAINT

Thank you, Monseigneur.

Lucky's in awe as Nick straps up. He swings a silenced AK-47 over his shoulder while Lucky plays with TWO LARGE SHOTGUNS. Both are tricked up, barrels sawed down to 7" with R.I.P engraved across each side.

LUCKY

How about twins?

NICK THE SAINT

Gimme those. This isn't a toy store.

Nick grabs the guns from Lucky.

LUCKY

So what is this place?

NICK THE SAINT

Home sweet home. I was raised here.

MONSEIGNEUR (O.S.)

I've raised many of God's children.

LUCKY

Stop the press. You grew up here?
At a monastery called "Our Shepherd
of Peace"? You're shittin' me?

MONSEIGNEUR

Nick was an orphan, and like many
of our pupils, he was taken in here
with open arms. Quite the student --
notably excelled in his training.

NICK THE SAINT

Top of my class.

LUCKY

Now that's a report card I wanna
see. Straight A's in Kickin' Ass
101, right? (laughs to himself)

Monseigneur hands Nick a fresh change of clothes. Nick
quickly throws on a crisp shirt and a clean overcoat.

NICK THE SAINT

Bless you, Monseigneur.

MONSEIGNEUR

Of course. The girl is upstairs.
You should tend to her.

NICK THE SAINT

(to Lucky)

Will you check on Hope? I have
something to discuss with the
Monseigneur.

LUCKY

Ain't a daisy if I don't.

INT. BELL TOWER - OUR SHEPHERD OF PEACE - **CONTINUOUS**

The spiral staircase leads into a musty old chamber at the
height of the cathedral. Creaking wood floors, layers of
dust, and 1/3 of the roof has broken away.

Lucky enters to find Hope smoking a Virginia Slim, legs
crossed. The bell tolls just above them.

HOPE

Hey there, Mr. Doyle. Or should I
just call ya Lucky?

LUCKY

Lady, you can call me Dick
"fuckin'" Tracey if it keeps your
legs crossed.

Lucky is obviously peering up her skirt through the heavy
cigarette smoke. Hope shifts her legs. Uncomfortably.

HOPE

Please don't mistake me for an easy gal, Mr. Doyle. I only play nice and sweet.

LUCKY

Oh, I love sugar. By the spoon full.

HOPE

Bet you love a lot of things. That's what makes you such a "lucky" fella... am I right?

Lucky removes a SMALL FLASK from inside his overcoat. He takes a swig, then offers it to Hope...

LUCKY

Drink? You look like a broad who takes her lunch from the bottle.

HOPE

I take my lunch any which way but wet.

NICK THE SAINT (O.S.)

Good nun. Bad Catholic.

We turn to find Nick standing in the doorway now. Lucky looks between Nick and Hope.

LUCKY

Wait... you're a nun?

HOPE

(nods yes)
Sister Hope Caufield.

LUCKY

So... you're a virgin?

NICK THE SAINT

Would you get lost?

Lucky takes another swig from his flask and exits the chamber. And...

NICK THE SAINT (TO HOPE)

Been a while, Hope.

Hope runs into his arms, kisses him. Exposed moonlight flowing across the scene creating an ambient blue glow.

HOPE

I missed ya, Nick. Was holding my breath for days hoping you'd find me. Now you're here, and my heart's skipping beats again.
(eye to eye)
You happy to see me?

NICK THE SAINT
 Well, you know what they say,
 absence makes the heart grow...
 suspect.

HOPE
 C'mon, say it like you mean it.

A beat. Then Nick kisses her. Forcefully. Almost savage.

HOPE
 That's more like it.

Another kiss. Lust lingering in the air, until Hope turns away -- changing moods on a dime.

HOPE
 I'm scared half to death, Nick. The sisters will kill me if I don't find that case. And I don't look good in bullet holes.

NICK THE SAINT
 What happened? Tell me everything.

HOPE
 I don't know everything. The only fault I made was playing Mother Theresa, and now... it's gone.

NICK THE SAINT
 You swore to hide it. Protect it.

Hope tries to take his hand -but- Nick pulls away.

HOPE
 But I thought I could use it to help, Nick. Cross my pretty lil heart. It just wasn't right, the sisters keeping something so precious hidden away from the rest of the world.

(beat)
 So I stashed it at that bank -- thought it'd be safe there until I figured out what to do next.

NICK THE SAINT
 Well, now we're gonna need to find it. Before anyone else does.

It begins to rain. Neither moving from under the open roof. They're getting soaked, both locking gazes in the downpour. Their pre-existing chemistry rising from their cores.

HOPE
 Where do we pick-up, Nick? What's your take on romance?

NICK THE SAINT
It's bad for business.

HOPE
Don't be silly. I've still got a
crush and I don't want to crush it.
We fell for each other once.

NICK THE SAINT
I fall for a lot a' things. But
that's all over now. Love is an
emotion that just don't stick.

HOPE
Depends how hard ya throw it.

NICK THE SAINT
And you throw like a girl.

HOPE
Oh, drop the muscle, Nicky. I know
you like playin' hearts with me.
It's why you came here in the first
place. Just couldn't let the one
who got away get away... could ya?

NICK THE SAINT
I came here because I was paid to
find that case. Trust me, Hope,
Fiasco Heights is not my idea of a
honeymoon tour.

Now, Hope goes in for another kiss. Deep. Passion igniting -
while- rain cascades around them.

HOPE
What are you hidin', Nick?

NICK THE SAINT
Skeletons. Closets of 'em.

HOPE
From the first day I met you I said
to myself, "Now there's a fella I
wanna know inside out". But you're
never the guy behind the gun, Nick.
You're always in front of it.

NICK THE SAINT
Either way, that guy's just a sinner
in saint's clothing.

HOPE
Well, I'd like to know him again.
Sins and all.

SUDDENLY - Lucky pokes his face back inside the door.

LUCKY
Yeah, I wanna know him too.

Nick and Hope both turn with a scowl, complete irritation.

LUCKY

Okay. Yes. I was eavesdroppin' right outside the door. Overheard all that sappy shit... *sorry*. But I'm a part of this too, so *I* need to know whatever *we* need to know.

HOPE

You pay this schmuck by the hour?

NICK THE SAINT

No. He's an asshole for free.

Nick stares at his reflection in a broken mirror, the eyes of a conscience heavy killer starring right back. He yields.

NICK THE SAINT

All right. Listen up, 'cause I'm not fond of flashbacks.

(beat)

I was on a standard liquor run about a year back...

SUPER:

"A YEAR BACK"

And suddenly, SNOW FLAKES begin falling all around them - right there in the bell tower. The stars dim above Nick, leaving only a streak of moonlight to SPOTLIGHT him.

AND CAMERA SPINS CLOCKWISE, CHANGING THE SCENE TO:

EXT. FIASCO BAY BRIDGE - NIGHT - FLASHBACK - BLACK & WHITE

SIX TUDOR TRUCKS wait in the middle of the bridge. It's foggy, snowing, wind so fierce it could take your face off. And now, we find Nick filling a flask from a leaking LIQUOR BARREL strapped down in the truck bed. Looks like there's about 10 barrels in all being transferred on this run.

NICK THE SAINT (V.O.)

We were moving ten barrels of hard stuff up the city limits. That's when Doughboy decided to downsize. He knew I was lookin' to move on.

Nick turns to find a loaded pistol in his face -and- MICK THE MORMON is the one holding it.

NICK THE SAINT (V.O.)

He ordered my partner to put the lead in my back, just for a splash of irony. I remember exactly what he said right before nudging the trigger...

THE MORMON
 I wish I could say the devil made
 me do it, but he's not the one
 signin' my checks.

BAM! Nick goes down, snow turning red as he bleeds out.

CAMERA WHIPS OUT OF THE FLASHBACK AND BACK ON NICK/HOPE:

NICK THE SAINT
 And he woulda' shot me twice for
 giggles, if the cops didn't show
 up. The good guys - 31st division.

RED & BLUE LIGHTS BEGIN FLARING THROUGHOUT THE BELL TOWER.

NICK THE SAINT (CONT'D)
 Seems the Haitians we were selling
 to ratted our score to the FHPD.
 They wanted to take over our
 outfit, see. Mergers,
 acquisitions... every syndicate in
 town was trying to gain turf and
 maximize power.
 (beat)
 Mormon was taken in, but the rest
 of Doughboy's crew were ducks.

GUNSHOTS ECHO AROUND THE BELL TOWER.

INSERT FLASHBACK MONTAGE

EXT. CITY LIMITS - NIGHT - BLACK & WHITE

- Nick staggers through some trees, past the city limit sign,
 where in the distance we come to A CONVENT. A neon sign
 blinks above the roof like a drive-in motel:

SISTERHOOD OF MINURVA CONVENT GETAWAY
"VACANCY -- FREE HBO"

NICK THE SAINT (V.O.)
 I sucked up some leftover strength
 and carried myself across the
 bridge. Found refuge beyond the
 city limits. At an unusual convent.

HOPE (V.O.)
 Good thing we had a vacancy.

- TWO NUNS rush from the convent as Nick faints at the door.
 - Nick is lying in bed while a few nuns care for him. One is
 praying beside him, another mending his wounds.

NICK THE SAINT (V.O.)
 The sisters nursed me back into
 fair condition.

HOPE (V.O.)
One in particular.

HOPE removes the lead slug from his back with some rusted tweezers. She soaks a towel in a bowl of hot water.

NICK THE SAINT (V.O.)
She was good medicine.

- Now, Nick and Sister Hope lie tangled in each other's arms. Sun gleaming through the blinds. They kiss -- in rapid fire.

HOPE (V.O.)
And fast recovery.

NICK THE SAINT (V.O.)
Twelve months of it. Spent the
entire year rehabilitatin' myself.

- A FEW ELDERLY NUNS hand Nick A PAYCHECK while he eats in the dining hall. They speak, but we won't make out the words.

NICK THE SAINT (V.O.)
But before bein' released, the
sisters gave me a charge. Said I was
the soldier of a worthy cause now.

The nuns step aside revealing THE "SALVATION" CASE.

NICK THE SAINT (V.O.)
They wouldn't tell me what it was,
but said the purest thing left in
this damned world was inside it.

(beat)

They employed me to escort the case
to a buyer in the east. Someone it
would be safe with. It'd been at
the convent for decades, see...

HOPE (V.O.)
...Word leaked about "salvation",
and there were too many interested
parties. So I thought it'd be
better locked away someplace else.
It was the devout thing to do.

- Sister Hope grabs the case while everyone sleeps. She exits the convent wearing her nun's uniform.

HOPE (V.O.)
...So I brought it here. Put it in
a deposit box at the Savings &
Loan. But lots of good that did,
seeing as how the place was robbed
the very next night.

NICK THE SAINT (V.O.)
I owed the sisters my life, so I
accepted their offer. I vowed to
find Hope and return the case
unopened.

BACK ON: Nick, Hope and Lucky in the bell-tower.

HOPE
And Nicky never breaks a promise.

LUCKY
(laughs)
That's the tale, huh?

NICK THE SAINT
Gettin' taller by the minute.

LUCKY
So this is what The Catholics are
probably sniffin' for. "Salvation".
That's the reason they asked me to
find our girl here.

(thinking)
I have a feelin' all roads lead to
heaven. If The Catholics know what
"salvation" is, then at least we'll
know what we're up against.

HOPE
So let's see where the straight and
narrow takes us.
(grabs keys)
I'll drive.

FADE TO BLACK:

SUPER: **"A FEW MINUTES LATER"**

INT. CONFESSIONAL BOOTH - NIGHT

The confessional window slides open to reveal Nick pointing
the .38 Special right at us. Lucky is squeezed in beside him.

NICK THE SAINT
Forgive me father, I'm about to
kill your ass.

FATHER PISARRO stops cold, a frightened expression. His body
trembling so hard he's a 10 on the Richter. Now, Nick punches
through the screen and pulls his face into the square...

NICK THE SAINT
I think it's time to fess up some
shit, preacher man. McBanister was
runnin' with your crew, now he's a
pale horse. What did he fall into?

LUCKY
Besides a mystery with lots of fun
clues and folks named "Whodunnit".

Father Pisarro starts to whimper like a little bitch.

FATHER PISARRO
*"Precious in the sight of the Lord,
 is the death of His saints."*

NICK THE SAINT
 (to Lucky)
 He makin' sense to you?

LUCKY
 Not a lick of it.

Nick cocks "The Special".

FATHER PISARRO
 You have no idea what you're
 dealing with here... you're messing
 with the ticking, tocking will of
 God.

NICK THE SAINT
 Save it, father. We're not drinkin'
 the Kool-Aid. Just tell us what's
 goin' down.

FATHER PISARRO
 McBanister was just a part-timer.
 Did some work with the rest of our
 loan out muscle. Just blue collar
 stuff - picking up our strays, like
 Doyle here. Whatever got him killed
 had nothing to do with the church.
 He must of been swimming in high
 tides on his own accord.

(to Lucky)
 The Good Book still has you down as
 a sinner, my fuckin' son.

LUCKY
 I found the girl. And I'll settle
 up once we find her luggage. That's
 what you really want.

FATHER PISARRO
 May be too late for miracles, Doyle.

Nick puts the gun to Pisarro's temple.

NICK THE SAINT
 Why'd you hire this spade to find
 Hope?

FATHER PISARRO
 There's no hope in Fiasco Heights.
 You of all people should know that,
 Saint.

Nick fires a shot into the wood beside Pisarro's face. Which,
 coincidentally, causes the ST. CHARLES BOYS CHOIR to cease
 their rehearsal outside.

NICK THE SAINT
McBanister mentioned "salvation"
before he fell asleep. Spill it.

FATHER PISARRO
It's merely something that we all
need, but never ask for.
(beat)
For years, we've been searching for
it ourselves. Never come close.
Frankly, I'm not sure it even
exists. But in the chance that you
find it, we'd be willing to reward
you handsomely.

LUCKY
What kind of reward?

FATHER PISARRO
Riches in heaven.

Lucky looks Pisarro in the eye...

LUCKY
I want a full pardon from the
church, and safe passage outta town
for my friend here. What about it?

FATHER PISARRO
That can be arranged.

LUCKY
Then consider that we'll consider
it.

Lucky turns to Nick with an optimist's smile, but Nick
acrimoniously shakes his head:

NICK THE SAINT
Not a chance.

LUCKY
(back to Pisarro)
Yeah, no, we can't do it.

FATHER PISARRO
Well, while you're considering
things, Doyle, just consider this:
If you don't have that dame by
midnight, we're gonna go from
slapping your wrists to slicing 'em
wide open. You still have a few
hours to make good n' even.
(to Nick)
And Nick -- you're in this too now.
His debts on you both.

Now, we hear footsteps outside the box... lots of them.

INT. ST. CHARLES CATHEDRAL - **CONTINUOUS**

Nick steps out of the confessional and rips Pisarro from the neighboring box. He throws the priest down on his knees and puts the gun to his head.

CAMERA SPINS TO REVEAL THE ENTIRE ST. CHARLES BOYS CHOIR HAS SURROUNDED THE CONFESSIONALS. Brass candle snuffers in hand.

Nick presses hard against Pisarro's temple.

NICK THE SAINT
Tell the choir boys to back off, or
it's last rites on the fly.

FATHER PISARRO
It's okay boys, let these men go.
They have our blessing. For now.

Nick inches towards the door using Pisarro as a shield. Lucky tries to intimidate the choir boys with a revolver -and it does- seeing how it accidentally misfires into Pisarro's foot.

Lucky turns to Nick with a concerned look, "Ooops".

NICK THE SAINT
Okay. RUN!

And our heroes hall balls out of the church with about twenty pissed off choirboys right behind them. They rip out the front door to find HOPE WAITING IN THE CAR ON THE STREET.

Hope kick-starts the engine immediately, reversing onto the sidewalk. Nick and Lucky jump in... and we're off.

INT. MCBANISTER'S CADILLAC - **MOMENTS LATER**

Louis Armstrong's 1932 version of All of Me is on the radio.

NICK THE SAINT
You should come with a permanent
fucking toe tag, you know that?

LUCKY
Relax, we made it out alive. Barely.

NICK THE SAINT
Barely doesn't come in smaller sizes.
That was as barely as it gets.

HOPE
Boys, boys, relax. Let's cap the
testosterone for now. And fasten
those seatbelts...

Hope rips the wheel, rain gliding across the windshield.

LUCKY
So, if The Catholics aren't tied to
this, then who connects the dots
with your boy McBanister?

Nick holds up the ketchup packet.

NICK THE SAINT
This has Doughboy's scent all over
it. My gut says that's where the
lines cross.

Hope delivers a peripheral glare. Very mysterious.

LUCKY
Well, speakin' of guts, mine are
back on the endangered list. It's
deadline season, and with an injured
priest on my conscience, I'd say
mercy is fresh outta stock.

NICK THE SAINT
Lose the conscience, it only makes
your shoulder heavy.
(beat)
Don't worry about The Catholics.

LUCKY
Easy for you to say. I'm the one
whose headed to a bed n' breakfast
six feet under. Face the facts,
would ya?

NICK THE SAINT
The only fact I'm starrin' down, is
that you're a five star, blue
ribbon, magna cum laude assfuck.
(beat)
We still have 3 hours to fill your
bargain.

Nick turns up the radio. Lucky reaches over and flips it back down again. Hope shakes her head...

HOPE
Children... please.

LUCKY
I didn't sign up to be no sidekick.
I need to know more about this
"salvation".

NICK THE SAINT
You know what I know.

HOPE
Ditto.

LUCKY
So jack shit all around. Guess that
means I can start drinkin'.
(removes his flask)
Cheers.

HOPE
To what? Celebrating early?

LUCKY

Never. This swig goes out to broken hearts, and dolled up dames who break 'em. It's a song I know well. As in my ex-wife...

NICK THE SAINT

(irritated)

Keep rambling, and I'll slap the retarded right off your face.

Now, Nick removes the GIDEON BIBLE that he pocketed from McBanister's house. He opens it to find an odd stamp across the front cover. It reads: **MOTHER GOOSE'S BOOK DEPOT**.

Lucky grabs the Bible -- looks at the stamp.

LUCKY

Wait, I know this bookstore!

(to Hope)

My friends, I think it's time for a trip to The Hamptons.

EXT. HAMPTON ALLEY - NIGHT

A cobblestone alley with an assemblage of junkies huddled over can fires and dirty works. Vagabonds of the world unite here, in what could be the most beautiful square in Fiasco. Very Victorian. A WOODEN SIGN SWAYS FROM ABOVE: THE HAMPTONS.

Camera pans through the derelicts to find our trio.

LUCKY

We're lookin' for a snitch named Mother Goose. Used to hole up in the local library - if there's word on the street, he's read it.

At the end of Hampton Square, we come to a small USED BOOK SHOP. A BLIND, BLACK MAN sits outside reading a brail edition of *The Inferno*. His eyes hidden behind a massive set of aviator glasses and thick dreads. And before Lucky can speak:

MOTHER GOOSE

(slight Jamaican accent)

If ya come fa ah story, we closed up. I don't rhyme no more, bredda.

Nick slaps Goose across the face with his leather glove.

NICK THE SAINT

Well start rhyming, or my knuckles get anxious.

LUCKY

Excuse me. Did you just slap my snitch with a glove?

Now, Nick slaps Lucky across the face with the glove.

NICK THE SAINT
 (back to Mother Goose)
 What have you heard about
 "salvation"?

MOTHER GOOSE
 Mi ain't heard nothin', bwoy!

Nick slaps Mother Goose across the face. AGAIN.

NICK THE SAINT
 See. I can rhyme too.
 (slaps him again)
 And I'll keep the smack on 'til
 you've made bitch of the month, so
 start leakin' the good stuff.

LUCKY
 (trying to be hard)
 What he means is quit duck, duck,
 duckin' the question, Goose!

Nick looks at Lucky, *idiot*. Slaps him in the face AGAIN.

Hope has seen enough of this clownshow. She steps in and kneels down. She takes Goose's hand, gently stroking it.

HOPE
 (cute and charming)
 Sir, please excuse the two buffoons
 behind me -- their manners are non-
 existent most of the time. I'm just
 a simple girl who asks for simple
 favors. And at the moment, I'm
 caught up in a tragedy of sorts.
 It's a little matter of life and
 death with scales tipping by the
 minute... that's the tragic part of
 it. See, the whole predicament is
 my fault, and I don't like two bits
 about it. So if you could pretty
 please tell us anything you know,
 it sure would make a happy lady out
 of a simple favor.

She leans forward, whispering into his ear:

HOPE (CONT'D)
 And I'm generous when I'm happy.

MOTHER GOOSE
 Aw-aight. Just tell dem two to ease
 up on the Mother fuckin' Goose.
 (beat)
 Listen close, nah, here's de story
 I be hearin'... starts with a bang.

SFX OVER SCENE : BOOOOOOM!

EXT. FIASCO SAVINGS & LOAN BANK - **FLASHBACK**

Shards of glass and metal hit the air as an entire ARMORED TRUCK goes up in a brume of fire. A shredded tire blows right over us while the truck barrel rolls through the front window of the **FIASCO HEIGHTS SAVINGS & LOAN BANK**.

A tidal wave of smoke blankets the street while hot debris rains down like hellfire confetti. And suddenly, FIVE MEN DRESSED AS VAUDEVILLE VILLAINS race through the wreckage. Each of them dawns an elaborate moustache and a black cape.

VILLAIN #1 (MASTERMIND)
(a tad British)
The package is inside, lock-boxed
in the central vault.

Fresh hundreds litter the sky as the thieves enter the bank.

INT. FIASCO SAVINGS & LOAN BANK - **CONTINUOUS**

VILLAIN #2 -decked in a cowboy hat- spits some chaw and SHOVES A SIX SHOOTER RIGHT IN OUR FACE:

VILLAIN #2 (COWBOY)
Loot up that bag or I'll blow your
goddamn head right off!

VILLAIN #1 jumps on top of a checking counter, removes a small PISTOL and begins firing into the ceiling.

VILLAIN #1 (MASTERMIND)
Ladies and gentlemen, if you
haven't noticed, this is a bank
robbery of heterogeneous splendor.
And we, are your dazzling
neighborhood bank robbers. We'd
like to welcome you to the show,
and declare that it's our great
pleasure to confiscate your
belongings this evening. Now,
everyone stay quiet and remain
seated during the performance, or
things are gonna get aggravated.

ALARM STARTS SCREAMING.

In seconds, every customer in the bank is kissing the floor. And one of every six has pissed their pants by now. Then...

An elderly SECURITY GUARD gets a rush of courage. He reaches for his weapon... UNTIL ...the point of a Winchester rifle snuggles up to his temple.

VILLAIN #2 (COWBOY)
I'd think twice 'bout that
muchacho. Wouldn't wanna get your
head in a tussle.

TWO OTHER VILLAINS pace the room itching for someone to get brave. They're a rough troupe -- bad news in the flesh.

ANGLE ON: MONEY BEING SHOVED INTO A DUFFLE BAG...

ANGLE ON: THE BAG IS QUICKLY PASSED OVER THE COUNTER...

AT THE VAULT

BAM-BAM! VILLAIN #3 -visible SCORPION tattoo on his neck-pops the vault guard and snatches the keys. He steps inside the cage and starts dumping security boxes.

Diamonds. Pearls. Jewelry. He keeps jacking investments until coming to AN UNNUMBERED BOX. The villain unhinges it and eagerly reaches inside, removing...

A BLACK LEATHER CASE with a RED CROSS inlaid across it. The villain peels off his mustache, smiles big. And remember this face? This flush, wrinkled face? You should, because it belongs to our now deceased friend PATRICK MCBANISTER.

Now, the gang rushes for the exit. COWBOY slings his COLT .45's into their holsters while McBanister secures the stolen case under his cape. MASTERMIND turns to his fear-crippled crowd and takes a bow...

VILLAIN #1 (MASTERMIND)
They call us the VaudeVillains.
(bows again)
End scene. Motherfuckers!

As he tips his hat, the fire RISES AROUND US.

AND END FLASHBACK:

EXT. HAMPTON ALLEY - CONTINUOUS

Goose re-adjusts his shades.

MOTHER GOOSE
There's fuckery in the air fa sha'.
Dat "salvation" wa lifted from da
Savin's n' Loan. Der's yo sparrow -
ketched up by some tiefs rentin'
costumes by da hour. Dey a bunch of
amateurs who love stealin' da show
eff ya know. But "salvation" ah
prolly just a bogus name for
sometin' big an badass, ya dig?

HOPE
We dig. Is that all?

MOTHER GOOSE
DA END. That's all The Goose knows.
An' there ain't no happily eva
after on dis motherfucka.

Nick puts a cigarette in Goose's mouth. He lights it.

NICK THE SAINT
What else ya got? Limerick. Haiku.
We'll listen to anything.

MOTHER GOOSE
I memba you, 'fren. Da prodigal
ma'fuckin' son an shit. He leaves a
cold blood killer, returns a
regular fuckin' Marlowe gone rogue
rotten on dem hurtin' pills. An de
other one is dat chatty-chatty
investigator wit salted karma.

Goose removes a \$100 dollar bill covered in BLUE DYE.

MOTHER GOOSE (CONT'D)
If mi was you, I'd be lookin' for
villains. The kind that steal.

LUCKY
Who robbed that bank, Goose?

Goose offers the stained bill to Lucky. Smiles big, gold
shimmering from his mouth.

MOTHER GOOSE
Well, that's da hundred dollar
question... ain't it, Spade?

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. CADILLAC - **MOMENTS LATER**

A stripper waits at the corner counting her tips. We see a
few BLUE BILLS mixed in with her wad of cash. The Cadillac
slowly follows as she enters a neon covered nightclub.

HOPE
Really Nicky? The Loaded Moon?

NICK THE SAINT
(holding up blue bill)
Just following the trail.

Lucky holds up the bill. Not only is it blue, but it's
covered in glitter as well. Stripper glitter.

LUCKY
Tit for tat.

NICK THE SAINT
(to Hope)
You better stay in the car... my ex
works this joint.

INT. LOADED MOON CLUB - **CONTINUOUS**

A classy joint filled with live music and second hand smoke. Type of place that serves lung cancer as a side dish. Nick and Lucky down their cocktails like pros -as- a jazz singer kicks off a melancholy original. Then...

SMACK! NICK IS SLAPPED ACROSS THE BACK OF THE HEAD!

HARLEY (O.S.)
That's for walking out on me.

SMACK! HARLEY (decked like a cigarette girl) gets him on the other cheek now.

HARLEY
And that's for stickin' me with the hotel bill. You're no good, Nick!

NICK THE SAINT
Easy on the backhand, tootse. You took my money and my gun. We're even. I'd say sorry if I could, but I can't, 'cause I don't. Just ain't my style.

SMACK!!!

HARLEY
Then that's for bad style. And don't call me tootse. I ain't your damsel to distress.

LUCKY
She's right... nobody says tootse nowadays. Unless it's rainin' maltese falcons in Chinatown.

NICK THE SAINT
(to Lucky)
Shut up.

Harley lights a cigarette and gives Nick a death stare.

NICK THE SAINT
All right. I'm sorry. There, I said it. And I wish we could hammer out our old shit with a bit more love and affection, but I'm here on business.

Harley inhales and turns to Lucky.

HARLEY
Who's the side-dish?

LUCKY
Doyle. Lucky Doyle.

NICK THE SAINT
 Nevermind him. He's trouble, and
 it's contagious.

HARLEY
 So what's got ya on the heel this
 time, Nick?

NICK THE SAINT
 Bad religion. Catholics got us down
 with clocks ticking. And the plot
 thickens as I speak.
 (holding up blue bill)
 We need to see the girls.

Nick reaches into Harley's cigarette carton and helps
 himself. He lights one up -as- Harley turns to Lucky.

HARLEY
 Sounds like a pinch. They got
 someone pinnin' your tail?

LUCKY
 God Squad. We're martyrs in the
 making, and for bottom lines,
 Pinstripes wants me limper than a
 fag on sorority row.

HARLEY
 Well if it's queer you're speakin',
 he definitely knows the language.

LUCKY
 Oh, he's fluent in it.

Harley hesitates for a second. Gives Nick another eye to eye.

HARLEY
 Fine. I'll take ya's back to see
 the gals, but don't think you're
 off the hook. Me and you still have
 old shit to hammer out.
 (beat)
 C'mon. Follow me boys.

The two follow Harley behind the bar, through the kitchen, to
 a masquerade wall. Harley pounds on it a few times.

LUCKY
 What are we doing?

NICK THE SAINT
 Getting information.

INT. STRIP CLUB - **CONTINUOUS**

Loud music. Half-naked strippers. Pole dancing. This place
 serves sin on the rocks.

But don't get anxious, the twist here is that all of these strippers are insanely obese. It's a XXL nude lounge. Like a whale tank at the aquarium.

Nick and Lucky are up to their balls in strippers, so much tit 'n ass in their face it's hard to breathe. And these are the kind of lap dances that leave residue on your pants.

A sweaty stripper grinds her pelvis into Lucky's waist...

LUCKY
This is your idea of getting more information?

NICK THE SAINT
Yeah. Just remember...

Nick points to a large sign on the wall: **HANDS OFF THE GALS!**

NICK THE SAINT
No touching.

Now - Nick whispers into ONE FAT STRIPPER'S ear. She takes a seat on his lap and leans back into him. Ouch.

STRIPPER
(re: whisper)
Maybe.

Nick holds up a ten dollar bill. She nabs it.

STRIPPER
What do ya wanna know, handsome?

NICK THE SAINT
A recent lift. Something of high value that's between transaction and open ended. Savings & loan kinda gig.

STRIPPER
I know that gig.

Nick holds up another ten - she snatches it quick.

NICK THE SAINT
Go ahead. Spin your web.

INSERT FLASHBACK #1: "THE LEGEND OF BILLY WILDE"

INT. CHEAP MOTEL - **NIGHT**

Our stripper starts to undo her skirt while facing the VAUDEVILLAIN IN THE COWBOY HAT. He sits on the bed, takes a pull from a bottle of bourbon.

STRIPPER (V.O.)
I have a client, pays for everything on the menu twice over. Boots on - lights off kind 'a guy.
(MORE)

STRIPPER (cont'd)

The other night, he goes brass nuts over some bank job he scored on. The Savin's & Loan job.
(she goes down on him)
He's a real cowboy. Like a real Marlboro made steer-fuckin' cowboy. Goes by the name Billy Wilde. Said he was part of some travelin' road show.

INSERT FLASHBACK #2: "SAVINGS & LOAN PICTURE SHOW"

THE ROBBERY OF THE FIASCO SAVINGS & LOAN. But this time the flashback plays out like an early century Vaudeville film. It's a Chaplin-esque strobing picture, black & white early Movie Cine. Let's begin:

- THE VAUDEVILLIANS STORM INTO THE BANK.
CAPTION: **"ENTER THE VAUDEVILLIANS!"**
- COWBOY VILLAIN (WILDE) PUTS A GUN IN OUR FACE.
CAPTION: **"HANDS IN THE FUCKING AIR! IT'S A ROBBERY."**
- MCBANISTER TURNS OVER THE VAULT. REMOVES THE BLACK CASE.
CAPTION: **"SALVATION."**

INSERT FLASHBACK #3: "THE GETAWAY CALAMITY"

STRIPPER (V.O.)
But post-robbery is when our cool hand compadre got the chicken shits.

The SIX VILLAINS are piling into a getaway MINIVAN. **POLICE SIRENS SCREAMING** in the background!! 31st precinct. Good guys.

VILLAIN #4 (BLACK/TONED)
Pigs are comin'!! Let's go!!

VILLAIN #5 (MASTERMIND)
Get the *bloody* fuck in!!

WILDE PANICS. He looks down at THE MONEY BAG IN HIS HAND. A BEAT. Then suddenly, WILDE HAULS ASS DOWN THE STREET.

VILLAIN #1 (HUGE/MUSCULAR)
(to Driver)
Fuckhole's gonna get himself captured. Just go!!

FOOT HITS THE GAS - TIRES SQUEAL - AND THEY'RE GONE!!

INT. BUS - DAY - CONTINUOUS

Wilde boards a city bus and goes for the back seat. He sits, takes a deep breath, and rips open the bag of money...

SMASH CUT TO:

EXT. SAME BUS - DAY - CONTINUOUS

SPLAAAT!! BLUE PAINT COVERS THE WINDOWS as an inserted dye pack detonates in full bloom.

END ALL FLASHBACKS

BACK ON: NICK HANDS THE FAT STRIPPER ANOTHER TEN.

NICK THE SAINT
A dye pack?

STRIPPER
Permanent ink. That sucka's got
more blues than Miles Davis after a
break-up.

Saint hands over a final ten.

NICK THE SAINT
I don't give a fuck if he glows in
the dark. Where can I find him?

She writes something across a napkin with her lipstick.

STRIPPER
This is the address he usually
calls from.

And as she drops the period on that sentence - NICK IS GRABBED FROM BEHIND AND RIPPED OUT OF THE CHAIR.

SLAM CUT TO:

EXT. ALLEY - BEHIND THE LOADED MOON - CONTINUOUS

NICK IS HURLED OUT THE DOOR, face decked in a new shade of black and blue. And we come face-to-face with Lucky, who dawns a BLACK EYE of his own.

NICK THE SAINT
What the hell?

A BOUNCER stands at the door with a FRANTIC STRIPPER.

FRANTIC STRIPPER
That's him! He grabbed my titty! You
molester pervert! My titty is
covered in his pervert fingerprints!

The bouncer calms her down and shuts the door.

NICK THE SAINT
Unbelievable. You touched her tit?

LUCKY

What was I supposed to do? There's
a sloppy boob bouncin' in my face,
pierced nipple by the way, and...

NICK THE SAINT

Hey!! Is there trouble stuck to
your shoe, or do they really make
people in your shade of stupid!?!?

LUCKY

C'mon. You're not the only one with
a new bruise. It was all you can
eat knuckle sandwiches out here.
That monster-fuck hit me so hard I
had the same dream twice.

NICK THE SAINT

That's a DAMN SHAME!

Now -- A LARGE FEMALE GOON exits the bar. She rolls up her
sleaves and approaches Nick/Lucky. Buzz cut. Muscles.
Tattoos. Hairy arms. She's more of a man then they are.

NICK THE SAINT

Hiya Butch.

BUTCH

(deep voice)

Nick. Welcome back. Wish I didn't
have to pound your face in, but you
know the rules. No touching.

NICK THE SAINT

Right. No touching. My bad.

(to Lucky)

When this is all over, you'd better
disappear like Houdini after a bad
lay. Otherwise, I might kill you
myself.

Nick punches Butch in the chin, but it doesn't faze her for a
second. She immediately grabs them both by the neck and lifts
them into the air. Squeezing hard. Both guys turning red.

Suddenly ...**WHAM**... BUTCH takes a 2x4 across the head. She
(or he or whatever) goes down with a "thud", revealing HOPE
behind her holding the makeshift weapon.

HOPE

Please tell me that's not your ex.

NICK THE SAINT

No, but I think he likes me.

HOPE

Well, this has certainly been an
affair to remember.

LUCKY
Who wants to remember?
(re: Butch)
Damn, that momma puts the "ugly" in
fuckin' ugly.

Nick begins to stubbornly walks away. Hope and Lucky follow:

LUCKY
Hey -- where are you going?

NICK THE SAINT
Well. You need to find the case to
stay alive. We need to just find the
case. So, in consideration of our
predicament, I intend to find said
case pronto, so that I can be the
FUCK done with you.

LUCKY
Just so you know, I'm putting a
complaint in the comment box. Your
attitude sucks.

HOPE
He has been pretty moody.

Nick gets to the street and whistles for a cab.

NICK THE SAINT
Hope, I want you to get back to the
sanctuary -- tell The Monseigneur
not to wait up. It's not safe out
her for a gal.

HOPE
I can handle myself, Nick.

NICK THE SAINT
Just do it.

He kisses her as the cab stops, opens her door.

NICK THE SAINT
It's only because I care.

She kisses him back.

HOPE
Just watch your back, Nick.

Nick nods as she gets in. Cab pulling away as we...

SWIPE CUT TO:

INT. TRAILER - NIGHT

CLOSE ON: BILLY WILDE -in his cowboy hat- sips a beer while watching a hunting program. The BLUE PAINT BLOTCHES on his face make his appearance unusual, but 100% recognizable.

SUDDENLY - THE TRAILER JOLTS FORWARD. IT BEGINS MOVING!

WILDE

The damn?

Wilde runs into the kitchen and opens the window. From his POV, we see his home speeding out of the trailer park.

NICK THE SAINT (O.S.)

Nice place.

Wilde jumps back against the refrigerator.

WILDE

SHI-YIT! Who the hell are you?
Jesus!

Nick lays a gun on the table.

NICK THE SAINT

No. I'm not Jesus, but he's a good friend of mine. Unfortunately, he's a bit more forgiving than I am.
Here, have a seat.

Wilde squeezes into the kitchen booth across from Nick.

NICK THE SAINT

I'm here to ask a pair of questions. 1) Where's the score?
And 2) where's the fucking score?

Wilde looks at the gun - then looks at Nick. He's serious.

NICK THE SAINT

What? Would it be easier in multiple fucking choice?

WILDE

Look. I was just recruited into that gig. Elbow grease kinda work. Then I panicked... didn't mean to take that loot... but...

NICK THE SAINT

Why don't you go get it.

With zero hesitation, Wilde goes to the closet and returns with the DUFFLE BAG OF CASH. He sets it on the table and opens it. Every bill inside is covered in BLUE PAINT.

WILDE

Here. I ain't spent much of it
seein' how the cops been lookin'
for stains.

NICK THE SAINT

(zipping the bag)

Is there anything else? Anything
top shelf?

WILDE

There was a satchel. A black leather
one. Hombres in the posse nabbed it
quick -- said it was priceless. I
got the feeling they wasn't gonna
cut me in, so that's why I ran off
with this loot here.

NICK THE SAINT

Who were the players?

WILDE

Everyone stayed masked and
anonymous. Even to me. But I did
overhear 'em say somethin' 'bout a
drop point. Some safe somewhere.

NICK THE SAINT

You don't say.

WILDE

Yeah, I believe I just did.
Anyhow's, if things went
unscripted, that was the fella's
term for bad, we was to run and ron-
day-voo at this here place here...

Wilde slides a small MATCHBOOK across the table to Nick.

INSERT: BLACK MATCHBOOK WITH A GLOSSY LIPSTICK KISS on it. No name. No location. He flips the matchbook open to find a number written on the inside flap:

"21"

Nick studies it.

NICK THE SAINT

Blackjack.

WILDE

Exactly. I don't know where this is,
or where it ain't, but I'd bet a dead
dingo's dong it's where them hombres
is gonna flip that satchel. One of
'em even kept a key on him always.

NICK THE SAINT

(to self)

McBanister.

Now, the trailer comes to a stop. Nick gets up, grabs the bag, and goes for the door...

NICK THE SAINT
Thanks. You're hospitality's been
real Southern and all.

He exits -AND- almost immediately WILDE RUSHES INTO HIS BEDROOM - GRABS A GUN - AND SPRINTS OUT THE DOOR AFTER NICK. BUT...

HE STEPS OUT ONLY TO DISCOVER THAT THE TRAILER HAS BEEN PARKED IN FRONT OF THE FIASCO SAVINGS & LOAN CRIMEScene.

The entire bank security detail has their weapons trained on him. Nick tosses the bag of DYED CASH to the bank manager - while- Lucky unties the Cadillac from the trailer's hitch.

WILDE DROPS HIS GUN upon the realization of being fucked.

INT. MCBANISTER'S CADILLAC - MINUTES LATER

Lucky hums along to the radio, as they pull into the cemetery leading up to "Our Shepherd of Peace". But then...

NICK THE SAINT
Awe shit!

Lucky looks up to see a cloud of smoke rising in the distance. Nick floors it -- driving between two mausoleums -- rapidly approaching THE BURNING CATHEDRAL.

Nick slams the car to a stop, and runs into the blaze.

INT. OUR SHEPHERD OF PEACE - CONTINUOUS

Flames everywhere. Ash. Tumbling tapestries. Nick sifts through the torched sanctuary until finding THE MONSEIGNEUR pinned beneath a burning pew. Too late... he's already dead.

NICK THE SAINT
No. Fuck me... no!

Now, he looks down to find A KETCHUP PACKET bubbling against the toe of his shoe. He picks it up -- identical to the one he found at McBanister's place.

LUCKY (V.O.)
And this is when it all got up
close and personal.

Lucky trudges through and grabs Nick's shoulder. He sees the ketchup packet in his hand.

LUCKY

Hey, I know that fast food joint.
 It's one of Doughboy's franchised
 burger cracks -- eat there all the
 time. Combo #9 comes with a gram of
 blow and medium fry. Great value.

NICK THE SAINT

Doughboy - I should'a seen it.

LUCKY

C'mon Nick, I know better places
 for BBQ. We're both gettin' tans
 just standing here. LET'S GO!

Nick signs the cross over The Monseigneur's corpse, and says
 another quick prayer.

INT. MCBANISTER'S CADILLAC - NIGHT

Cue radio, Rudy Vallee's 1931 *Brother, Can You Spare A Dime*.

NICK THE SAINT

They took her. Doughboy and Mormon
 have Hope. I'm sure of it.

LUCKY

But the case is what they really
 want, right?

NICK THE SAINT

And they'll use her to find it.

LUCKY

Not if we find it first.

Nick nods.

NICK THE SAINT

The Catholics, the bank job, the
 Franchise... none of it adds.

Lucky stares at the matchbook -then- an aura of brilliance
 ignites. If light bulbs really went off overhead after strokes
 of genius -well- we'd see about five of them right now. Or...

BING! THE CAR LIGHT FLASHES TO LIFE ABOVE LUCKY.

LUCKY

Then don't add it. Smell it.

Lucky puts the matchbook to his nose and takes in the scent.

LUCKY

That, my shamus friend, is a scent
 I could never forget.

NICK THE SAINT
 Cut to the part where you tell me.
 And quit calling me your friend.

Nick snags the matchbook back and sniffs for himself.

LUCKY
 It's Jasmine with a hint of white
 sandalwood. Very distinct. Very
 rare. Very Chinese.

NICK THE SAINT
 Chinatown.

LUCKY
 B-i-n-g-o. That spells you're
 goddamn right.

AND LUCKY THROWS THE CADILLAC INTO A U-TURN.

EXT. CHINATOWN - NIGHT - ESTABLISHING

CLOSE ON: An enormous BLACK BILLBOARD WITH A GLOSSY KISS MARK. Camera cranes down, finding an old bus station below the billboard. And we're smack in the middle of Chinatown:

Neon characters flash intensely against the orange glow of shaded street lamps. Flaring "take-out" signs beat against a swarming fish market. We're not lost in translation here... we're fucking drowning in it.

INT. CHINATOWN BUS STATION - CONTINUOUS

RON WONG LEE, an Asian greaser in an Armani suit, enters the station and wanders through a maze of lockers. He stops at LOCKER #21. Then, he removes A KEY and pops the locker open. And inside, we're starring right at...

THE BLACK CASE BEARING A RED CROSS... AKA "SALVATION".

Wong Lee grabs the case, and *cuffs* it to his wrist. Then exits. Never once realizing that NICK & LUCKY are watching every move from the 2nd floor balcony.

NICK THE SAINT
 Blackjack.

LUCKY
 Jack-pot is more like it. Who's he?

NICK THE SAINT
 Ron Wong Lee. Otherwise known as
 Don Wong. He's a number cruncher
 for Doughboy. Looks like The
 Franchise fund out about our bank
 guzzlin' drama club, and sliced up
 McBanister until he turned over the
 key to their score.

LUCKY

Maybe it's just my private eye
 blinkin' here, but that doesn't
 feel right. If McBanister was
 involved with the acting troupe,
 then why was he helpin' Hope? See,
 unless we're cookin' mcguffins
 here, you don't steal a priceless
 case just to steal a priceless
 case. Those robbers knew what they
 were after, so they had to be
 workin' for somebody, right?

NICK THE SAINT

Well if I knew who they were, I'd
 ask them that question personally.

Lucky removes the deck of playing cards from his pocket. He begins to shuffle.

LUCKY

My mentor, God rest his soul, once
 told me that if the investigation
 feels like a mirage, just drink the
 water. And if you're still thirsty,
 then it wasn't really water to
 begin with.

NICK THE SAINT

So. What the hell does that mean?

LUCKY

I don't know. I just thought it was
 cool.

NICK THE SAINT

Idiot.

Lucky lifts a card from his deck. THE QUEEN OF HEARTS.

LUCKY

But maybe it means that our queen's
 just playin' the board, eh?
 (changing subjects)
 The hell do you think is in that
 thing anyway? Something that goes
 boom? Ca-ching?

NICK THE SAINT

I don't give a damn what's in it,
 as long as it keeps Hope alive.

LUCKY

Then let's snag Don Wong before he
 bags outta tea town.

EXT. CHINATOWN - NIGHT - CONTINUOUS

Lucky watches Wong Lee cross the street to THE RED PALACE. An old establishment lit up like a cheap Chinese jerk joint.

He turns to Nick as Wong Lee goes inside.

LUCKY
Shit. The Red Palace. You ever hear
of the China Doll 7?

Nick lights a cigarette.

NICK THE SAINT
Nope. But I'm sure you're gonna...

LUCKY
Best lip massage I've ever had.
Turned my head numb for 5.7 seconds.
Even made my asshole tingle like...

NICK THE SAINT
...I get it.

LUCKY
Well, if you cross these slant
broads they'll go Genghis-Khan on
your ass. Knock ya out with your
own stiff chubby.

(beat)
Good pal 'a mine went in there once
for a Saigon sucky-sucky, and he
got blown alright... blown right
the fuck away. Police found his
nuts in different zip codes. Left
one still had lipstick on it.

NICK THE SAINT
Is there a point coming on?

FLASH INSERT: SEVEN CHINESE GIRLS ENTER FRAME IN A SINGLE
FILE LINE. AND WE'RE INTRODUCED TO THE DEADLY CHINA DOLL 7.

They stand shoulder to shoulder in a parlor, staring at us.
Their pale white make-up has them looking as dangerous as
they are beautiful.

LUCKY(V.O.)
Yes. See, each of them gals is
tattooed with a numbered dragon,
right on the back of the neck...

FLASH INSERT: ONE OF THE GIRL'S TATTOOS. A COLORED DRAGON
CIRCLED AROUND THE **NUMBER "2"**.

BACK TO:

LUCKY
If ya ain't got an invite, the only
way to stop them crazies is to kill
the madam, Mai Dei. Except ya got a
one in seven chance of that, since
no one knows what number she is.
Now ain't them some sour odds?

NICK THE SAINT

They don't come any sweeter. Thing is, we're here for Don Wong. I got no beef with the hookers.

EXT. CADILLAC - **CONTINUOUS**

Nick opens the trunk to reveal a wealth of guns stashed from the Monseigneur. He reaches for THE TWINS.

LUCKY

(starring @ Red Palace)

Though pessimism isn't a trait I expose regularly, I have been known to exhibit concern under unfavorable circumstance.

NICK THE SAINT

You think this circumstance is unfavorable?

LUCKY

Well, I'd be lying if I said it was just fuckin' peachy.

Nick hands over a small DERRINGER. Lucky stares at it, pathetically, in the palm of his hand.

LUCKY

And I don't mean to be dramatic, but can I have a bigger gun?

NICK THE SAINT

You're not being dramatic. You're being a pussy. Just point and shoot - they all do the same thing.

AND WE SMASH TO:

INT. RED PALACE - **CONTINUOUS**

Nick kicks in the door and interrupts Wong Lee in mid-hummer. His hooker frantically splits -just as- Nick rests the shotgun barrel on Wong's chin.

NICK THE SAINT

You have a final prayer. Use it religiously.

(dead quiet)

Lucky, grab the case.

LUCKY

With pleasure.

DON WONG

Jush take it!

NICK THE SAINT
I don't remember asking permission.

Lucky grabs the case -but- it's still cuffed to Lee's wrist.

LUCKY
Would you mind asking him to remove
the cuffs?

NICK THE SAINT
Drop the cuffs, Don Wong, or I take
'em off... hands and all.

Wong starts to tear up.

DON WONG
I cun't. Do'boy is kill me if I
do...

Nick notices A FIRE AXE resting in a glass emergency box
outside the room. WE HOLD ON IT FOR A SECOND.

NICK THE SAINT
Wong answer.

Nick signs the cross with his gun, then... **KA-BOOOM!**

INT. RED PALACE - **NIGHT** - CONTINUOUS

Nick descends a spiral staircase carrying the *bloodsoaked*
BLACK CASE. Wong Lee's arm still dangling from it.

NICK THE SAINT
See, that was cake.

AND SUDDENLY...

A swift kick comes out of nowhere and puts Nick on his knees.
CHINA DOLL #4 rushing him from the corner, screaming. Nick
lifts the shotgun, and... **BOOM!!**

Her smoking carcass slides across the floor, slamming into a
table of candles and burning incense. WE SEE THE **NUMBER FOUR**
tattooed to her neck as she slumps over. Dead.

Now, CHINA DOLL #7 kicks the gun from his hand just as his
finger sets off a misguided shot. The murderer screams and
KICKS AT HIM AGAIN - THIS TIME DRIVING HER **SHARPENED STILETTO**
HEEL INTO HIS SHOULDER.

SNAP. His clavicle cracks like plastic, he's pushed against
the wall - stiletto sliding farther inside him. TEETH
GRITTING IN EXTREME PAIN.

He grabs her ankle and slowly begins to push her leg back.
With only the tip left in his flesh - HE GRABS HER BETWEEN
THE LEGS, using his leverage to throw her to the ground.

NICK GOES FOR HIS WEAPON -AS- DOLL #2 JUMPS TO HER FEET:

She lunges forward as he lifts the shotgun, barrel driving into her chest and stopping any forward progress. Her jagged nails claw at his cheek, but that's where it ends...

BOOM! SHE'S FLUNG ACROSS THE ROOM SMASHING INTO A BUBBLING FISH TANK. Glass and water floods the room. Flopping fish struggling to breath. No use. A whole lot of dead fish... and a dead China Doll to match.

ANGLE ON: LUCKY. He's struggling - already on the ground with TWO vicious girls atop him. He screams high-murder as they stuff a gag in his mouth. And bad luck strikes hot again.

Nick cocks his weapon and rushes the girls in mid-torture - but- they scatter like flies under a swatter. He reaches down and rips the gag from his Lucky's mouth.

LUCKY
BEHIND YOU!!

Saint ducks JUST AS THE BLADE OF A SWORD sweeps his head space. He rolls off of Lucky and takes a shot. An instant miss - THIS BITCH is playing the shadows to her advantage.

He stands and reloads - probing the shadows all the while. AND **POW...** Nick takes a shot to the temple. He stumbles back. **POW...** another high kick to the jaw.

Falling to a knee, he sees ALL OF THE FEMALE KILLERS encircling him within the shadows around the room. Now...

CHINA DOLL #3 whips a wire around his neck. She tightens - life being squeezed out of him - he struggles for a drag of air.

TIGHTER NOW. Choking. He reaches up and grips her hair. Tugging so hard we can hear the roots snap. But she holds firm.

Nick struggles to his feet with the killer on his back, yanking harder than ever. His face loosing color. And... THERE... Nick sees it. A PLATE OF ROTTING CHINESE FOOD.

But there's something else. Something that consumes his last dying efforts. He goes for the plate, weakening faster. Falling to the ground Nick reaches up, hand digging through the moldy slop. THIS IS HIS ONLY SHOT.

Hand wandering for it... THERE... A CHOPSTICK. He grabs it, AND WITH EVERY OUNCE OF ENERGY LEFT IN HIM, he thrusts it over his shoulder... STRAIGHT INTO THE EYE OF CHINA DOLL #3.

THUMP. Her body hits the ground dead. A bloody chopstick protruding from her socket. Nick rips the wire from his neck and sucks in a lung-full of oxygen.

Now, CHINA DOLL #2 strips a beret from her hair - each toggle razor sharp. She rears back and throws...

WHISP. The blades drive into Nick's thigh. He slumps over in pain. Agony. This could be the end of the road.

At once, the remaining killers come at him with everything they've got - pouncing like a pack of wolves. THEN...

BAM! A gunshot.

Nick jerks up as one of the girls drops to the floor. Blood spewing from her neck. She looks at him with tear-filled eyes -and- hits the ground face first.

The other girls jump back, pure panic. Each of them begins to cry profusely. Moaning. They immediately kneel beside their fallen companion, attention no longer on Nick/Lucky.

The Saint looks through the torn RICE PAPER WALL to see, LUCKY, holding the **DERRINGER** he gave him at the cab.

LUCKY
That's her. Mai Dei.

Saint turns to the mourning China Dolls. They crowd Mai Dei's body like a swarm of bees around their fallen queen.

NICK THE SAINT
How'd you know?

A smirk takes shape on Lucky's face.

ANGLE ON: Mai Dei's tattoo. IT'S THE NUMBER FIVE.

LUCKY
My lucky number.

FLASH INSERT: A SLOT MACHINE. Dollar signs CA-CHING into all three slots, sending A FOUNTAIN OF COINS FROM THE MACHINE.

Lucky's smirk transforms into a full fledged smile. He hobbles over to Nick, and lifts the hitman to his feet.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT/EXT. RED PALACE - NIGHT - CONTINUOUS

Nick/Lucky (and the case) are exiting the Red Palace. Lucky reaching into a jar of RICE CANDY, stuffing his jacket with it. He offers some to Nick.

LUCKY
Rice candy?

NICK THE SAINT
Gimme that.

Nick takes almost all of Lucky's boxes. Lucky scoffs

LUCKY

I can't believe you shot the rest of them. That was just mean, man.

NICK THE SAINT

Why? You want them reminiscing our little visit over tea time? Because I'm sure there'd be some bad fortune in those cookies. Anyway, it's not like those gals sell tupperware or drive carpool... they wanted to kill us.

LUCKY

Could've just been PMS.

NICK THE SAINT

If it was PMS, we'd be dead already.

Nick tosses the "SALVATION" into the back seat of the car.

NICK THE SAINT

So, me and you... we're good, right? Time to fly solo?

LUCKY

Wait -- what about The Catholics? I'm in the ground if I come up empty. And I can already feel the dirt in my pockets.

NICK THE SAINT

Well, it's midnight. Your deadline is up, pal. That means our contract became past tense about an hour ago.

LUCKY

Oh, you mean our BULLSHIT contract?

NICK THE SAINT

Yes. But a contract nonetheless.

Lucky sits down on the curb.

LUCKY

Look, I know I'm a fuck up...

NICK THE SAINT

No. A fuck up is forgetting to carry the one in long division. You're an absolute fucking catastrophe.

LUCKY

Hey, for the record, all that pain n' grievance crap has been yours.

Lucky's at a loss for words. He sighs. All he is to anyone is a loser, and his expression does the thought justice.

NICK THE SAINT
Here...

Nick removes a wad of the BLUE BILLS from his pocket, and hands it to Lucky. Then he pops a rice candy in his mouth.

NICK THE SAINT (CONT'D)
I snatched this from the Cowboy's trailer. It should be enough to settle your sins. Just drop it in the offering and put Fiasco Heights in your rear view. Like I'm gonna do when this is all over.

(beat)
I finally have some leverage, and I need to go this alone. For her. If Doughboy wants salvation, he'll have to pony up the girl.

Lucky shrugs. Forcing a nod.

LUCKY
(pissed)
Underdog gets flushed again, eh?
All because your agenda weighs more than mine. Well, fuck that noise!
I've killed bottom feedin'
motherfuckers for less...
(Nick pulls out his gun)
Nevermind. We're good. Deal's a deal. But thanks for the adventure, it was... real fair n' all.

Nick slaps Lucky on the shoulder, shrugging him off.

NICK THE SAINT
Well. Good luck.

LUCKY
(already lonely)
With what?

NICK THE SAINT
Staying alive. And all that shit.

Nick hops into the Cadillac. The car immediately jerks forward as he starts the engine. And it continues lurching violently as he tries to accelerate. Our hero obviously can't drive stick.

Lucky watches as he coasts around the corner... out of sight.

LUCKY (V.O.)
So here I am, fresh from the ringer. No clue. No case. And no Hope. Been shot at, beaten to pulp, and I only got three strikes to show for it. I'm spilt chum, and the sharks are comin' fast.

TIME CUT TO:

INT. DRY CLEANERS - NIGHT

BLUE BILLS whip through a money counter -while- the dry cleaners launder Lucky's payback money behind a moving track.

LUCKY (V.O.)
 Maybe Nick was right, just pay my dues and ride outta town. Start fresh. So I went to clean my bills. But there I am mindin' my own business, when...

PINSTRIPE (O.S.)
 Dirty laundry, Luck?

And we turn to find THE ENTIRE GOD SQUAD standing behind him.

PINSTRIPE
 Cheers mate. How about we all go for a pleasure cruise? Distribute his ticket, Champ.

Knockout Jones rears back for the hook.

LUCKY
 Wait! The money's right here.

PINSTRIPE
 It isn't about that anymore.

And suddenly, Pinstripe steps aside revealing SISTER HOPE.

HOPE
 Where's Nick? And where's that fucking case?

Lucky is speechless. And will remain speechless when Jones levels him, triggering the swipe dissolve that takes us into...

INT. MEAT LOCKER - NIGHT

Pounds of meat hanging from razor sharp hooks. And we dolly through vertical ranks of frozen beef to find, LUCKY, hanging by his collar from one of the meat hooks... FROZEN BODY BAGS dangling around him.

Lucky breathes a heavy sigh. HIS BREATH SPELLS "FUCKED" ACROSS THE AIR.

CUT TO:

EXT. CORNER OF 55TH AND 5TH - NIGHT

The busiest corner in the city as far as wholesale women go. A one stop shop and go for any STD on the market.

Nick pushes through the riff-raff and finds Harley hitting a fresh joint. He takes her by the arm.

NICK THE SAINT
How 'bout a freebie?

Nick is a mess. Scrapes. Bruises. Flesh wounds of the like.

HARLEY
Jesus. What happened, Nicky?

Harley wipes a streak of blood running from an open gash.

NICK THE SAINT
Cut myself shaving.

HARLEY
With what? A butcher knife? You're
chopped up pretty good.

NICK THE SAINT
Just got banged around - thought
I'd see you about a fix-up. I'll
even pay by the hour.

INT. THE FIASCO HOTEL - **MOMENTS LATER**

Nick is up to his neck in bubble bath while Harley stitches him up. He grits his teeth as she dabs a wound with alcohol, then seals it with gauze.

HARLEY
So what's with the suitcase? You
packin' for a bad trip?

NICK THE SAINT
Only kind I take.

He winces as she dabs another wound, his fingers digging into the porcelain of an antique four-legged tub.

NICK THE SAINT
Thanks for the stitches, babe.

Harley swabs his lip with some cotton. Nick stares her in the eye, might be some emotion there if you look hard enough.

HARLEY
I'd mend your wounds any day, Nick.
It's why I've never minded ya
takin' a beating.

The moment lingers. Then, Nick grabs Harley around the neck and pulls her into the tub. She slides into him willingly, taking his head from behind. They kiss. BUT NICK STOPS.

NICK THE SAINT
I... I can't, Harley.

She loves him, but it's not reciprocated. And it shows. Still, she holds him under the bubbles. Caressing his back, as he leans for the bourbon bottle resting in the soap dish.

HARLEY

I'm sorry about who I am, Nick. I thought you were gone for good. The big sleep and all that jazz. I just wish I could take it back... I used to love bein' your only trick.

NICK THE SAINT

I'm over it. Besides, let's face it, you'll never teach kindergarten.

Harley snuggles closer.

HARLEY

Tell me why you're here. You always used to say that if ya ever left this town, ya'd never look back.

NICK THE SAINT

And I didn't. But no matter where you go, the life you left catches up somehow. I actually thought I could make good for all the shit I've done. Redemption, ya know?

(lights a cigarette)

But when you've seen enough people die, put enough people in the dirt, there just ain't enough of it to go around. I'm a condemned fella, see.

HARLEY

And who's this gal ya been chasin'?

NICK THE SAINT

She's the only good person I've ever come across. That's why I care about her so damn much.

It hurts Harley to hear it, but she forces a smile and kisses his neck again.

OFF SCREEN: THE DOORBELL RINGS.

Nick looks at Harley. She shrugs without a clue. Nick steps out of the tub and throws on a bathrobe.

INT. FRONT DOOR - NICK'S ROOM - **CONTINUOUS**

The Saint opens the front door to greet...

POW!! A HARD BLOW TO THE JAW that literally lifts him off his feet and into the living room. And THE POPE enters, charging Nick like a juiced up bellhop with fresh headaches to deliver.

SLOW ON: THE POPE'S DISTORTED FACE, and we hear the SFX of a BULL SNORTING. A steriod induced bull that's coked out of its fucking mind of course.

Nick climbs to his feet and reaches for a GUN on the coffee table -but- he doesn't quite make it before POPE grabs him by the robe and flings him into the wall --

-- Exploding through the other side in an eruption of drywall, and slamming into an armoire in the bedroom.

Nick quickly jumps onto the bed and REACHES UNDER THE PILLOW. HE WHIPS OUT THE DESERT EAGLE and takes a few misguided shots. **BLAM. BLAM. BLAM.** Nothing serious.

THE POPE enters the bedroom in a rabid charge. He grabs Nick and lifts him by the robe, then ... **SLAM...** puts him against the wall in a fierce choke hold.

Nick struggles for air. He reaches for a full bottle of wine resting on a nearby dresser -- maybe this is a good idea.

CRACK! Not really. The bottle shatters over The Pope's skull with no result - leaving us with nothing but 500 lbs. of pissed off bad guy.

THE POPE LAUNCHES NICK ACROSS THE ROOM. His body hits the ground, sliding across the hard wood floor into the next room.

THE POPE
Honestly, I hoped you'd be bigger.

NICK THE SAINT
Yeah. Me too.

SUDDENLY - Saint grabs a HOT IRON off of an ironing board and slides across the floor on his knees. He rears back...

SMACK! Nick hooks The Pope square in the nuts with the iron, Steam hissing as the thug's sack gets branded by Black & Decker.

Pope grabs Saint by the neck!!! Squeezing tight!!!

IN THE BATHROOM

Harley covers herself with suds as PINSTRIPES and JONES enter. She gasps as Pinstripes saunters up close.

PINSTRIPES
No need to be shy, just the postmen ringing. We're here for a pick-up.

Pinstripes grabs SALVATION and kneels to tub level. Then he thrusts his hand into the water, grabbing her between the...

PINSTRIPES

You even think about screaming, and
I'll knot your neck tighter than
these tied tubes you let everyone
poke around at.
(stops, reconsiders)
On second thought...

He pulls his gun, aims: **Bang-Bang-Bang.**

EXT. THE FIASCO HOTEL - CONTINUOUS

NICK IS LAUNCHED OUT THE 15TH STORY WINDOW. DEAD FREEFALL. In descent, HE CRASHES THROUGH **FIVE** VERTICAL NEON LETTERS SPELLING OUT **FIASCO**. Each letter shatters into sparks as he falls. **F-I-A-S-C...**

...Saint hits the **O**, which doesn't shatter - merely shifts and partially breaks away from the wall. He hangs on for dear life. Our hero, hanging above the city from a neon letter in his bathrobe.

The Pope appears on the fire escape and makes his way down to meet us. Nick is a sitting duck.

NOW - Nick pulls the gun from his bathrobe pocket and unloads hell. **BLAM. BLAM. BLAM. CLICK. CLICK.** And we're empty.

Pope smiles and begins sliding on some leather gloves. His shoddy laugh telling us that Nick hasn't landed a shot.

Until, of course, we catch sight of the smoke rising up from his chest. The laughing stops, smiles fade, guy's so jacked up it probably took him a few seconds to feel the pain. He begins to groan... slowly reaching for his own piece.

Nick has nothing left. No defense. He hangs in silence for a moment -THEN- in spontaneous desperation, HE THROWS THE EMPTY DESERT EAGLE.

CLUNK. Pope's head kicks back as the heavy weapon beans him in the face. The Pope stumbles back in a temporary daze, his arms flailing about as he collides into the railing and drops over the edge.

The earth shakes as his body THUDS to the ground. A short flight. Estimated time of arrival... 4 seconds.

Nick grabs a drain pipe and glances at The Pope's lifeless body - shards of asphalt broken up all around it. The impact of the fall alone has set off every car alarm in a two block radius. Let's just call this professional handiwork on the fly.

Nick smirks to himself and begins to shimmy down the drain pipe. Upon reaching the ground, he checks Pope's neck for pulses. Nothing. Then suddenly...

HEADLIGHTS coming straight at us! Nick has a second to react, but he wastes it wondering "what the fuck"! The car thwacks him at the waist and sends him over the hood.

And while Nick lies unconscious on the pavement, the driver's side door opens -and- a PINK HIGH-HEEL SHOE steps into frame.

FADE TO BLACK:

LUCKY (V.O.)
 Hey. Pssst. Nick is that you?
 (beat)
 Hey Nick. It's me... Lucky.
 (beat)
 Nick. WAKE THE FUCK UP!

INT. MEAT LOCKER - NIGHT

Nick opens his eyes to find himself hanging from a meat hook, hands bound, with Lucky hanging just across the freezer. He immediately makes a muffled cry through his duct-taped gag...

NICK THE SAINT
 Mmmmm mmm mmmmm? Mm mm mmmmmmm?
 (subtitle:)
"WHAT THE FUCK? WHAT THE FUCK?"

LUCKY
 Yeah. I hear ya.

NICK THE SAINT
 Mmmmm mmm mm?
 (subtitle:)
"WHERE ARE WE?"

LUCKY
 We're at the Chop Shop.

NICK THE SAINT
 Mmm mmmmm mmmmm? Mmmmm. Mmmmm mmmmm'mm
 mmmmm. M mmm'm mmmmmmm mmm mmmmm!
 (subtitle:)
**"THE CHOP SHOP? GREAT. JUST FUCKIN'
 GREAT. I CAN'T BELIEVE THIS SHIT!"**

FREEZE FRAME:

AND SUDDENLY -- Lucky bursts into a very fast, very fluent narration describing our surroundings.

LUCKY (V.O.)
 The Chop-Shop. So called for the
 hundreds of immigrant children
 illegally gift wrapping on the
 bottom floor.

**CAMERA SUDDENLY DROPS BELOW THE FLOOR, WHIRLING INTO A 360
 DEGREE ROTATION. AND WE FIND OURSELVES IN THE CHOP-SHOP...**

Where groups of foreign children sit at long tables slaving away on BRICKS OF COCAINE. Beads of sweat drip down their faces -- you can't buy this kind of labor.

The kid to the right cuts - who then passes to the kid who packs - who then passes to the kid who wraps. The brick is then dropped in a wheelbarrow at the table's end. It's a solid procedure.

LUCKY (V.O.)
 Damn kids are the best in the business. I know it sounds bad, but it's better than pumpin' out sweaters or high end kicks.

Another kid comes by and lifts the FULL WHEELBARROW. WE STAY ON HIM as he wheels it down an empty corridor and dumps the load INTO A LAUNDRY SHOOT.

WE DROP INTO THE SHOOT ALONG WITH THE FRESH BRICKS.

LUCKY (V.O.)
 Each shipment is then dumped...

WE WHIP THROUGH THE SHOOT - OUT OF THE SHOOT - AND DROP INTO THE BACK OF A STOCKED SNOW PLOW.

LUCKY (V.O.)
 ...Loaded into a dozen snow plows, and shipped out to every slum and pissed up alley in Fiasco.

NOW - A GARAGE DOOR OPENS AS A FLEET OF SNOW PLOWS EXIT THE WAREHOUSE. Each one turning into a different route than the last. And the latest shipment of drugs hits the city.

WE ZOOM IN ON: ONE OF THE BRICKS. This particular brick then dissolves into another that slides across the children's table. A visual effect that proves this process is an endless cycle.

LUCKY (V.O.)
 Pack. Drop. Rinse. Repeat. There's always fresh powder in this forecast. And that's life in the Chop-Shop.

The kids laugh, all staring forward at a mini-television. On it, A BARNEY-LIKE DINOSAUR prances along to some dumbed-down lyrical catastrophe.

DINO THE DINOSAUR
 Come on kids - sing with me.

KIDS (ALL)
 THE-ITTSY-BITTSY-SPIDER-WENT-UP-THE-
 WATER-SPOUT...

CAMERA RIPS BACK UP THROUGH THE CEILING - TURNS ANOTHER 360 - AND WE'RE BACK ON NICK/LUCKY IN THE MEAT LOCKER...

Nick tries to shake himself off the hook. No use.

NICK THE SAINT

Mm mmmmm mmm mmmmm mmmmm. Mmmmm mmm
 mmm mmmmm. Mmmmm mmm mmm'm mmm mm...
 (subtitle:
**"WE GOTTA GET OUTTA HERE. THEY GOT
 THE CASE. THE GOD SQUAD's GOT IT..."**

The door cracks as KNOCKOUT JONES enters the locker. He pushes aside some meat and grabs Nick around the collar of his robe. He lifts him off the hook.

INT. COMMUNITY SHOWER - CHOP SHOP - **FEW MOMENTS LATER**

WHACK! Nick takes a crushing hook to the jaw. **WHACK!** Fresh DNA sprays across the room. **SIX BRUTISH POLICE OFFICERS** (52nd) are pummeling him, just like the scene from our open.

The cops back-off. The chair spinning dilatorily, allowing us to view Nick's beaten face in glimpses of flickering light.

DOUGHBOY (O.S.)

Looks like you gotta knock for
 musical chairs. Here you are, best
 seat in the house.

As the chair spins back around, we reveal the most disgusting, hideously **FAT FUCK** you've ever laid eyes on. This is DOUGHBOY, kingpin of Fiasco Heights. MICK THE MORMON stands in the shadows behind him. A loyal right hand.

He deep throats a few tater tots, then squeezes a packet of ketchup right into his mouth. Notice that the ketchup packet MATCHES ALL THE OTHERS that Nick has found.

DOUGHBOY

Want some tots?

NICK THE SAINT

I'm full.

DOUGHBOY

Suit ya'self.

Now, Doughboy unwraps a bean burrito -and- takes a huge bite.

DOUGHBOY

I got some bones with ya, and it's
 gonna be fun picking 'em.

MORMON approaches Nick and backhands him with brass knuckles. Blood disgorges, violently, sending another stray tooth rattling across the tile. Mormon steps back.

DOUGHBOY
(chewing tots)
You're grinnin' all over the floor,
Nick. I guess I speak for the both
of us when I say we're all smiles.

NICK THE SAINT
Don't talk with your mouth full,
fat lady -- you'll never hit the
high notes.

Mormon clobbers Nick again.

DOUGHBOY
Ya know, I love watchin' you
suffer. And I don't give a furry
fuck in the summer time how long it
takes.

Nick struggles for breath.

NICK THE SAINT
I shoulda known you were behind
this, the plot was drippin' with
grease.

DOUGHBOY
I'm behind everything in this town.

NICK THE SAINT
Touche.

Mormon backhands Nick AGAIN... more flesh tears. More blood.

DOUGHBOY
(nodding to the case)
Salvation. 100% unfiltered and
uncut. I hear the contents of this
case are beyond priceless. So,
humor me, what's in the thing? Tell
me, before I open it.

NICK THE SAINT
Diet pills - not really your thing.

SMACK. This time Doughboy cracks him across the jaw with his
CANE, then he calls off the 52nd officers.

DOUGHBOY
Wise ass.

The 52nd thugs leave the room.

NICK THE SAINT
Who pulled off the bank score?

DOUGHBOY
I did. I assembled a crew right
outta The Catholics own back yard.

SPLICE FLASHBACK: THE GETAWAY MINIVAN. Our 5 mystery robbers remove their disguises revealing PINSTRIPE (villain #1), WILDE (villain #2), MCBANISTER (villain #3), KNOCKOUT JONES (driver), THE POPE (villain #5).

DOUGHBOY

The God Squad works for me now. I had those puppets hit five banks 'til they got it right. Let them keep all the proceeds though.

(bite of tots)

See, I couldn't have my own guys get caught shoplifting from the offering plate. No way. I ain't gonna start a war over this.

(bite of burrito)

And that girl you been flossin' with... what a floozy.

SPLICE FLASHBACK: HOPE locks THE CASE away in the safe deposit box at The Fiasco Savings & Loan. McBanister and Pinstripes are staking out the bank, but don't see her.

DOUGHBOY

But we couldn't have done it without her. She was putty, and it's gonna be criminal when you...

BLAM! Chunks of brain matter and burrito freckle Nick's face, bloody bone fragments splattering the walls. And we dolly back to find THE MORMON HOLDING A HOT TRIGGER -- gun clearly visible through the giant hole in Doughboy's head.

THE MORMON

Call me impatient, but I got sick of waitin' on his monologue.

Nick's face is dripping with high cholesterol.

THE MORMON (CONT'D)

Don't look so shocked, Nick. You should be happy I gave that fat fuck a B positive shoe shine.

Mormon grabs the case, and slides a chair in front of Nick.

THE MORMON (CONT'D)

With Doughboy singin' somewhere over the rainbow, I'm gonna run this show alone. And this case is gonna help get me started.

NICK THE SAINT

Why? You're low on motive, Mormon.

THE MORMON

Don't need motive when there's greed in the air. I've already got buyers lined up for this shit. Catholics included.

(MORE)

THE MORMON (cont'd)

They offered big bucks along with a cut of their own turf. And that's real power, Nick. Genuine fuckin' power. So call this my own private little double-cross.

Mormon lights up a cigar.

THE MORMON (CONT'D)

See, unlike you, I actually know what salvation is.

(inhale-exhale)

It's a new recipe your crazy nun employers concocted. A drug so potent it'll make heroin look like cough syrup. Every tweaker in the city will kill to put this shit in their arm, and one fix will cost thousands. The only thing standing in my way were the sisters - trying to keep it all for themselves. I just had to wait for the right one of them to help me... that's when I found Hope.

NICK THE SAINT

You're a liar.

THE MORMON

No. I'm a drug dealer. Salvation is a high so pure you'd think God was right there walkin' you through it. So clean it feels like redemption running through your veins. So warm you'd swear you were kissed by angels. You'll wake up feeling like a new man, with a fresh start. And after you shoot up once, you'll never have the urge to do it twice.

(inhale-exhale)

That's what you want, right Nick? A quick fix of redemption?

(now a vicious glare)

But let's just talk about how my boys two-holed your cunt-hooker.

WHAM! NICK HEAD-BUTTS THE MORMON, blood spills from his mouth!

NICK THE SAINT

How those words taste?

Mormon gets up and grabs a MEAT HOOK -then- swings it into Nick's shoulder. Nick flinches in pain as it pierces his flesh.

ANGLE ON: A RUSTED CAN OF LIGHTER FLUID. Mormon grabs it, begins dousing Nick. It's soaking through his robe.

THE MORMON

Don't get brave. Just because I don't drink Coke or watch R rated flicks, doesn't mean I won't make this hurt.

Mormon grabs the case, but before he goes, he'll make sure to spark his lighter and strategically place it over the central drain of the shower room. Fluid trickling towards it.

THE MORMON
I'll leave the lights on for ya,
partner. Sweet dreams.

Nick struggles to free himself. It's useless - the chair swivels but it won't budge. He tries to blow out the flame. He blows - and blows - and blows. But no dice.

Then... Nick sees something. Two eyes peering from an empty shaft in the wall. Someone is watching him. He looks closer.

IT'S ONE OF THE KIDS FROM THE CHOP-SHOP BELOW.

Nick stretches his hand into the bathrobe, reaching deeply into the pocket...

NICK THE SAINT
Kid. Hey kid. I need your help.
(kid doesn't budge)
Do you like candy? Rice candy?

...And he tosses a small BOX OF RICE CANDY onto the floor.

JUMP CUT TO:

INT. STAIRWELL - CHOP/SHOP - **NIGHT**

VICTIM #1: A gangster climbing the stairs. He's wheezing like a fat kid who just ran a mile. Gangster stops for a break and takes a puff from an inhaler. But...

As he opens his mouth for a second puff, the raw end of A GLOCK 18 SELECT IS STUFFED INSIDE. Fatty's lips quiver around the barrel.

NICK THE SAINT
Hey Wheezy.

BAM! The inhaler goes airborne. Nick signs the cross, then checks Wheezy's coat tag -- looks like a perfect fit. He quickly removes the jacket and begins to dress.

INT. INTERROGATION ROOM - CHOP SHOP - **NIGHT**

KNOCKOUT JONES carries a stiffer version of Lucky out of the meatlocker. He sets him in a chair as TWO POLICE THUGS begin strapping him down. Lucky's teeth are still chattering.

PINSTripes (O.S.)
Calm down now Eskimo, you're
speaking so fast I can't make out
the words.

PINSTRIPES lights a clove and exhales in Lucky's face.

PINSTRIPES (CONT'D)
You've been leaking trouble from
the start, Doyle.

Pinstripes lays his hand on Lucky's shoulder, massaging.

PINSTRIPES (CONT'D)
Here it's my day off and I'm about
to get my suit all dirty. It's not
worth the time and a half.

LUCKY
Don't get anxious on coppin' feels.
I try to keep cock outta my diet.

Pinstripes bitch slaps Lucky across the chin.

PINSTRIPES
I'll assume that's just the
frostbite talking.

CLICK... Pinstripes pops a SWITCHBLADE against Lucky's cheek. Razor sharp edge pressing into the bone, piercing his skin with the tip of the blade.

PINSTRIPES (CONT'D)
Let's call this your divine
intervention. You know, since you
won't be living through it.

Pinstripes nods to Knockout, who opens a burlap sack and begins filling it with SALT. He then slips the bag over Lucky's head and seals it at the neck with duct tape.

Knockout now removes a GRENADE from his sweatsuit and balls it up in his fist. PUNCH. JAB. HOOK. JAB. JAB. UPPERCUT. He's just pummeling Lucky's face like a punching bag.

LUCKY'S MUFFLED SCREAMS ECHO as the salt drives into each fresh wound along with the Champ's knuckles. He swallows a mouthful of blood & salt, then screams again.

AND SUDDENLY -- BAM! THE ECHO OF A GUNSHOT.

All heads turn to PINSTRIPES. He gasps, clove falling from his mouth. Slowly, EVERY WHITE STRIPE IN HIS SUIT BEGINS TURNING RED, blood seeping into the fabric.

BAM!! His chest opens in an eruption of blood, and Pinstripes keels over in a lifeless pile. Behind him...

NICK THE SAINT enters in a fume of rising smoke. TWO LOADED GUNS in hand. He gives COP #1 a point blank introduction... **BAM! BAM!...** and sends him out messy. Now...

Nick weaves as both Knockout and COP #2 reach for their guns. They unload hell -but- Nick makes his way across the room using frozen body bags as cover.

THE SAINT flips on KNOCKOUT. One barrel locked and loaded.

BOOM! NICK PUTS A HOLE IN JONES, his body thuds the wall and drops clean. But remember that grenade he was using as a punching weight? Well, it slowly rolls across the floor... and the pin doesn't seem to be in it.

Nick dives just as... **BoooooooooM!**

Every wood plank in the ground splinters at the force of discharge. Floor blasting in an eruption of debris causing all of our players to free-fall into the factory floor.

Nick drops onto a cocaine cumbered table, while Lucky smashes to the ground in his chair. He's out cold.

NICK STANDS COVERED IN POWDER -- CHILDREN ARE SCREAMING, RUNNING RAMPANT ALL AROUND US... bolting for the exits.

BAM. BAM. BAM. BAM. BAM. BAM. BAM. BAM.

COP #2 starts firing like a guerilla on overtime -as- Nick tosses one of the tables on end and kicks it toward him... FIRING THROUGH THE WOOD AS IT SLIDES ACROSS THE FLOOR.

THE DINOSAUR MUSIC PLAYS OS -UNTIL- A BULLET SHATTERS THE TV.

COP #2 empties his pistols and reaches back for a two-hand refill. Bricks of cocaine are going off around us like fire crackers. It really is snowing in this fucking place.

Nick glissades the tabletops, escaping one bullet at a time. Debris creating a haze beneath the symphony of hissing ammo.

A STRAY SHOT TRIGGERS SOME ELECTRICAL WIRES FROM A FUSE BOX - AN ENORMOUS SPARK - FIRE SPREADS ALONG THE WALLS.

Nick squints as specks of cocaine pelt his face. And he dives behind a wooden column for cover -**KA-BLOOM-** just as a clump of it projects into a fray of splinters. Now, Nick lowers and turns to fire... double-fisting this time. **BANG-BANG-BANG.**

Cop #2 is flung to the ground when a table mushrooms in his face, gun sliding out of grasp. He scatters for the gun, as...

Nick quickly grabs a sharp instrument (same one the children were using to cut the drugs) and heaves it across the room.

THUNK. The cleaver-like tool lodges into the cop's forehead. Blood torrents down his face like the floodgates just opened.

Now, Nick stumbles to a semi-conscious Lucky, unties him.

<**BOOOM**> Another circuit blows as Nick slaps Lucky awake. Fire roaring across the walls - this place is igniting on high.

NICK THE SAINT
C'mon Doyle -- wake up!
(Lucky stirs)
Let's get the hi-fuck outta here.

Nick lifts Lucky onto his shoulder. Together they hobble for the drop-shoot, the ceiling coming down all around us.

INT. GARAGE - CHOP/SHOP - **CONTINUOUS**

LUCKY/NICK FALL FROM THE SHOOT and land in a SNOW PLOW brimming with coke. The two of them are blanketed as they break open every brick upon landing.

CLOSE ON: Our guys caked in white powder, freckled in drugs & blood. The Chop Shop going up in a blaze of fire above us. So, Lucky scoops up some blow and has a sniff. Re-energizing.

NICK THE SAINT
Really? You think this is the appropriate time for that?

LUCKY
<snort> Huh? <snort> What?

Nick/Lucky climb out of the plow, and run out of the smoking garage. Down the street, Nick conveniently catches THE MORMON helping HOPE into a sleek town car. It begins to pull away.

NICK THE SAINT
(to Lucky)
Come on -- hurry!

And Nick steps into the street to front a large DELIVERY TRUCK. As it stops, he aims his gun at the DRIVER, forcing him out.

SUDDENLY OS -- **THE ROAR OF POLICE SIRENS.** The 52ND back-up unit is en route and gaining.

Nick climbs in the truck and pulls the clutch down. Lucky casually stumbles into the passenger seat. AND WE'RE OFF... WITH THE ENTIRE **52ND PRECINCT NOW ON OUR ASS.**

Nick whips a curve, following the town car up an on-ramp that spits us onto an insane autobahn-like freeway. ROUTE 99 - a road that's never heard of speed limits.

MASSES OF TAILING POLICE CRUISERS RIGHT BEHIND US. **SIX SQUAD CARS** and **4 police MOTORBIKES** to be specific.

BASH! ONE CRUISER RAMS US FROM THE RIGHT!

Delivery truck swerves violently, then regains forward momentum. Nick steers out of it and rams back, sending the cruiser wide to prove Nick has the bigger pair.

BOOOOM! Metal twists as the cruiser slams straight into the median. It goes up in two pieces. Glass scattering through the air like someone shook up a snow globe.

LUCKY
Special delivery, fuckhead.

Now, THE FOUR BIKERS weave to the front of the pursuing caravan. Each unstrapping a TOMMY GUN from their bikes.

Nick shakes right as BIKER #1 puts a string of pearls in the windshield. He aims his .38 SPECIAL out the driver side and goes for the fences...

BAM. BAM. BAM. BIKER #1 skips the bullets just as BIKER #2 ponies up next to the speeding truck.

Nick jerks the wheel and tries to put BIKER #2 against the walls. But the rider grabs onto the rear view mirror -- his bike getting crushed as he lifts off.

Biker #2 punches through the passenger window and takes aim - but- Nick dives over and KICKS OPEN THE DOOR. Biker #2 holds on for dear life as the door swings fully open... AND SMASHES AGAINST A **NO SPEED LIMIT** SIGN.

ON THE HIGHWAY: A MINIVAN OF DELINQUENT KIDS enters the mix.

BIKER #1 opens another round from his Tommy -just as- BIKER #3 comes up from behind the truck. Nick gets a sudden rush of true grit in his blood... AND... HE SLAMS THE FUCKING BRAKE!

Smoke rockets from the wheels as the truck stops cold! AND **WHAM** - Biker #3 slams into the rear bumper, jacking his body forward and throwing him into the truck past Lucky...

BIKER #3 SLIDES ACROSS THE FLOOR until his shoulders CRUNCH between the two front seats. Nick instantly puts the .38 to his temple and pulls the trigger.

ANGLE ON: THE BOTTOM OF THE TRUCK -AS- **BAM!** A BULLET HOLE EXPLODES THROUGH FROM ABOVE. And a stream of blood follows.

Nick puts the gear back into 4th and accelerates hard. BIKER #1 still taking shots from the cheap seats two lanes over.

So, let's welcome BIKER #4 to the party. HE'S COMING RIGHT AT US AGAINST TRAFFIC -- TOMMY ON FULL. Nick treads the fire and puts the pedal down. It's a hard-ass game of chicken.

WHAAAAM! And it couldn't be possible, but BIKER #4 just went into the grill with a flesh smoldering slam. Nick smiles.

NICK THE SAINT
Judges?

LUCKY
I'd call it a tie.

Now, **RAPID GUN FIRE PELTS THE SIDE OF THE TRUCK** as Biker #1 ponies up to Nick/Lucky - delivery truck getting shredded.

LUCKY
We're losin' our cover...

ENTERING FREEWAY: A FLATBED 16 WHEELER TRANSPORTING A ONE STORY HOME.

Nick gets a crazy idea -and- goes right for it. Pedal kissing the ground as the speedometer puts one in the record books.

SLAM!!! The delivery truck plows into the home! Pieces of low class architecture crack to pieces as the truck charges through and hops the trailer, disappearing in the eye of destruction.

Then, out of nowhere, the side door of the home swings open as NICK LEANS FROM IT and FIRES RAPIDLY. He cleans his barrel, putting five shots across lanes.

Nick dives back inside when the final Biker #1 sprays another round across the home. More spent ammo.

INT. MOVING HOME - **CONTINUOUS**

A cozy little place. Flowered wallpaper. Berber carpet. Matching sofas. A mounted deer head... AND A HUNTING RIFLE ABOVE THE FIREPLACE.

Nick reaches for it. Checks the barrel.

INT. MOVING HOME - **CONTINUOUS**

Nick opens the bathroom window and steadies the rifle against his shoulder. He takes a deep breath, aims carefully... **BAM!**

WE GO SLOW MOTION

AND FOLLOW THE BULLET AS IT TRAVELS ACROSS LANES - INTO THE MINIVAN - BETWEEN A ROW OF FIGHTING DELINQUENTS - OUT OF THE MINIVAN - AND MAKES A FATAL "CRACK" IN THE VISOR OF BIKER #1.

RESUME MOTION

Great shot! Nick smiles because he knows it. But he soon forgets as THE TRAILER STRAPS BEGIN SNAPPING. Home leans, slowly tipping off the 16 wheeler. Nick braces.

NOW ON FREEWAY: A FULLY LOADED GARBAGE TRUCK.

INT. TRANSPORTABLE HOME - GARAGE - **CONTINUOUS**

Lucky jumps into the driver's seat of the delivery truck and punches the clutch. Nick climbs in too -AND WE- REVERSE OUT OF THE TIPPING HOME BACK ONTO THE FREEWAY. Just as...

The house topples to the asphalt, rolling in direct path of the TOWN CAR. AND **BOOM...** the car plows right through the corner of the home, lifting off the ground, and...

Sparks fly as the town car flips, skidding across three lanes of traffic. Metal grinding as it barrel rolls with sheer tenacity. Nick grits his teeth, knowing Hope is inside.

Smoke *HISSES* as the overturned town car settles on the FIASCO BAY BRIDGE.

NICK THE SAINT
HOLY SHIIIT!

LUCKY
HOOOOLY SHIT!

Honk. Honk. Honk. Collisions ensue as every car on the road stops on a dime to avoid the wreckage. Fender benders chirping all around us like a catastrophic lullaby.

Nick stops the delivery truck and signs the cross. Lucky tries as well, fucking up the rotation. But Nick doesn't notice, because already racing across traffic to the overturned town car. And suddenly...

CLICK - CLICK - CLICK - CLICK - CLICK. An arsenal of weaponry sounds off around Lucky as he almost pisses himself.

O'TOOLE (OFFICER)
Hands in the air, shit-stain!

Lucky removes the small DERRINGER from his pocket and raises his arms. And... **BAM...** it accidentally misfires. Again.

LUCKY
Oops.

The bullet hits the GARBAGE TRUCK TIRE sending the speeding vehicle skidding right into the bridge rail at 65mph.

CRASH!! All officers turn as the trucks *slams* on it's side, vaulting a night's waste into the air like a catapult. And...

Lucky watches as about 23 body-bags lift into the air, hoovering. Then it begins RAINING CORPSES all around us. **SPLAT. SPLAT. SPLAT.** Literally dropping like flies.

The cops take cover after a corpse smashes onto a cruiser... giving Lucky just enough response time to suck in his own nerve and fire the derringer.

SCENE GOES COMPLETELY SILENT:

All we'll get to hear is **THE BEATING OF HIS HEART.**

BA-BUMP. BA-BUMP. BA-BUMP. BULLETS ZIP ACROSS THE SCREEN FROM ALL ANGLES AS THE GUNFIGHT BEGINS. Everything in sync with the pace of Lucky's heartbeat. **BA-BUMP. BA-BUMP. BA-BUMP.**

He turns his head just as a BULLET *GRAZES* HIS CHEEK. Hot ammo pings across frame while body-bags fall. All cops going down with elegance, as if this were choreographed by Bob Fosse.

SOUND RETURNS: As Lucky finds himself standing, miraculously, with about 5 HOLES IN HIS OVERCOAT. Lucky smiles, until...

BAM. A "STRAY" SHOT TO THE CHEST TAKES HIM DOWN.

INT. FIASCO BAY BRIDGE - **CONTINUOUS**

Nick gets to the town car and rips the door open, but there's nothing but a DEAD CHAUFFEUR inside.

THE MORMON (O.S.)
Watch your back, Nick.

BAM. Nick takes A SHOT IN THE BACK -and- keels to the ground. He groans and slumps against the bridge rail, pressing a thumb to his shoulder to apply pressure.

Now, THE MORMON emerges through the smoking debris. Fiasco Bay glistening all around us.

THE MORMON
I know, that's twice. I'm chokin'
on the bittersweet of it all.
(beat)
But this is a fitting note to end
on. Can I get an Amen?

Then, **POP!** Mormon screams like hell as his knee cap goes off like a firecracker. Smoke surging from below Nick's face, where he firmly has the .38 "SPECIAL" aimed inside his jacket.

BAM. Nick puts another shot in his chest, grounding Mormon with gusto. He falls against the opposite rail... THE CASE LYING DIRECTLY BETWEEN THEM BOTH.

NICK THE SAINT
Amen.

Nick smiles. Until a third figure slowly steps into the moonlight. And it's none other than SISTER HOPE CAUFIELD. She limps through the smoke, passing right between Nick & Mormon.

AN UNSETTLING FEELING COMES OVER NICK as she reaches down for the case. His expression consumed with heartache.

HOPE
Don't act so surprised, Nick, I'm
no virgin when it comes to bein'
naughty. You should'a seen that.

NICK THE SAINT
I just didn't know you'd sell out
for 30 specks of silver, sister.

HOPE
Try 15 million specks of silver and
we'll share the same page.

THE MORMON
(through utter agony)
Nick, I'd like you to meet my wife.
Or, one of them anyway. How's that
for twists?

NICK THE SAINT
That true?

HOPE

Guilty.

(blowing Mormon a kiss)

Doesn't mean we can't be friends
though, Nick. Pen pals even.

NICK THE SAINT

I don't like friends.

(putting it together)

This play was rehearsed and I fell
right between the lines. You stole
the case and stashed it for your
hubby here. Seein' as how his
release was only days out...

INSERT FLASH: Hope stashing the case at the bank. Never once noticing that SWEATS TAKES THE POLAROID PICTURE as she exits.

NICK THE SAINT

But the twins had ya pegged from
go... they must'a tipped ya off to
every interested party in town.

INSERT FLASHES: Sweats shows the Polaroid to Doughboy. He looks at HOPE'S PICTURE and smiles. Next, Sweats passes the picture to Father Pissarro, who then passes it to Pinstripes. Who then passes it to Lucky. Who gets it to Nick.

NICK THE SAINT

Then that drama club pulled a
matinee right under your nose.

INSERT FLASH: The Vaudevillains robbing the bank. McBanister removes his moustache upon retrieving the case. He smiles.

NICK THE SAINT

All the while, Mormon just played
dummy until his crew got possession
'a the ball again. So when The
Catholics agreed to pay big, you
lovebirds started playin' dirty.

INSERT FLASHES: Hope stabs McBanister. Removes the key from his Gideon Bible. She tucks it into her bra, just as Deli's cab races up -and- Nick storms through the front door.

NICK THE SAINT

And covered your tracks.

INSERT FINAL FLASH: Hope kills Monseigneur at the sanctuary. She then lights a match and tosses it onto a wooden pew. And all the while... Mormon is standing behind her. They kiss.

NICK THE SAINT

When Mormon got the case, you two
cleaned out everyone involved. Even
Doughboy... and your own outfit.

HOPE

Plan B - we just sit back and let
you clean them all out for us.

(MORE)

HOPE (cont'd)

You rolled a good game, Nick. I wouldn't be here, with this, without all your help. So bravo... but ya don't get the prize this time around.

Hope walks over to her dying husband.

NICK THE SAINT

I've already had the prize, Hope. You've given it up a few times now.

HOPE

Don't flatter yourself! I was always in the driver's seat.

NICK THE SAINT

And I was always in your rear.

BAM! Mormon fires above Nick's head. A miss. His final shot.

THE MORMON

Hey! You're talkin' about my wife!!

Nick looks at his wound, blood trickling down his sleeve now.

NICK THE SAINT

How could you do it, Hope?

HOPE

Don't you understand? There ain't no Hope. Never was. I posed like a school girl until the sisters showed the goods. Frankly, I couldn't wait to get outta there. It drove me nuts - those bitches need to get laid.

THE MORMON (O.S.)

(coughs blood)

Baby... I may some help here...

Hope immediately turns her aim at Mormon.

HOPE

Awe shucks honey, this case is only packed for one.

BAM! The blow catches Mormon right between the eyes. His head kicks back in a gust of blood, arms flailing to the side.

She turns back on Nick...

HOPE

Sorry Nick. It was sweet, really sweet, but I love killing a good romance.

She steps closer to him, cocks her gun. Then...

BAM. ANOTHER SHOT RINGS OUT. Hope stumbles backwards, blood running down her neck. A look of extreme confusion takes face as she slowly drops to the ground, spitting blood. And...

...Lucky Doyle is standing behind her. Derringer surging. And we see the wound on his chest... IT'S COVERED IN WHITE GOO. Then LUCKY REMOVES THE TUBE OF GLUE FROM HIS JACKET POCKET -- IT CAUGHT THE BULLET.

LUCKY
To broken hearts.

Nick nods to Lucky -then- turns his gaze back to Hope.

HOPE
Sa-save me, Ni-ck. Pl-ease save m-
me. Give me... what's... in... th-
that ca-case... plea...

Her body begins convulsing. Violently. Saliva spilling down her cheek, fingernails digging into the asphalt.

Nick watches her for a moment, reaches for THE CASE. Then...

...HE OPENS IT.

And there it is... SALVATION. AN 8" SYRINGE loaded with a dense, crystal clear fluid. It almost has a surreal glow within the streaks of moonlight shining across the bridge.

Nick stares at the syringe. This drug... this simple fucking drug... is the cause of all this. The one thing he was sent to retrieve is just a needle filled with untested product.

He reaches into the case, hands trembling. Lifts the needle over Hope. She's begging him, crying, pleading that maybe it will kill the pain. Somehow.

HOPE
Please. Nick.. it... it hurts.

We can read the conflict on his face. A tear forming, rolling down his cheek. His first sign of emotion. Of weakness. Maybe he did love this woman once. But only once.

NICK THE SAINT
I can't. It's not for us.

Her convulsions turn extreme. Blood torrenting from her nose. AND NICK THINKS TWICE. The guilt weighing on him...

AND SO, HE THRUSTS THE SYRINGE INTO HOPE'S ARM. HE INJECTS HER. And before her eyes roll back into her head, she smiles one last time. Utter peace taking face as she slips away.

More moonlight spreads across the bridge as Nick places the empty syringe back in the case. Lucky helps him up.

NICK THE SAINT
 (finishing Lucky's rant)
 And dolled up dames who break 'em.

In the distance, we see a platoon of squad cars arriving on the scene. All their hoods say **31st... THE GOOD GUYS**.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. FIASCO HEIGHTS - **NEXT DAY - ESTABLISHING**

The city is bustling. Streets more alive than ever. It isn't raining today.

And we track through the rooftops of Fiasco Heights, slowly coming to FIASCO CENTRAL STATION. A gothic structure that resembles Grand Central if built during the Roman Empire.

EXT. CENTRAL STATION - **CONTINUOUS**

DELI is loading Nick's things into the taxi cab. Nick, arm in a fresh sling, takes "salvation case" from Lucky -and- slowly TEARS THE RED CROSS RIGHT OFF THE CASE... yes, very unusual.

LUCKY
 How ya feelin', pal?

NICK THE SAINT
 Like someone shot me in the back.
 You?

Lucky smiles at the sarcasm for the first time. THEN...

FATHER PISARRO (O.S.)
 I think you got something that belongs to us, fellas.

CLICK. CLICK. CLICK. Not again. And Nick/Lucky turn to find a hard boiled crew of choir boys holding semi-automatics. Father Pissarro, on crutches, leads the group.

NICK THE SAINT
 (smiles)
 In fact, I think we do, father.

Nick hands over the SALVATION CASE without a fuss..

FATHER PISARRO
 (to other clergy)
 See brothers, even the blackest of sheep can still find their way.
 (to Nick/Lucky)
 The Church thinks it's best you two hitch outta town. Pronto.
 Otherwise, you'll be escorted to the bay in time for 40 days and 40 nights of high tide.

NICK THE SAINT
You're absolutely right, Father.
I'm actually just leaving now. This
place ain't my scene anymore.

FATHER PISARRO
Then go with God.

And the holy mob mumbles amongst themselves, then they turn to slowly fade into a sea of pedestrians.

LUCKY
So what'd you give 'em?

NICK THE SAINT
Can't say, but I'm pretty sure that
this time... it goes boom.

Lucky chews on that for a second, then cracks a grin.

NICK THE SAINT (CONT'D)
Just a little trick I learned in
pre-school. Let's only hope they
don't open it 'til Christmas.

LUCKY
What about the nuns?

NICK THE SAINT
Well, I've gotta tell them the
truth about Hope. But I don't think
they'll mind, as long as I have
their recipe...

Nick reveals the RED CROSS from the case -to which- the entire back side is blocked with chemical formulas and scribbled numbers. The recipe has always been attached.

LUCKY
Shit on me! That's what they really
wanted back all along... ain't it?

Nick winks at Lucky. The kind of wink that says "sequel".

NICK THE SAINT
Maybe there is redemption out
there, friend, just doesn't always
come in shiny black cases.

DELI(O.S.)
Almost rush hour, Nick.

Nick removes a BLACK CARD from his coat and hands it to Lucky.

NICK THE SAINT
If you ever need to reach me...
don't.

INSERT CARD: "NICK PRINE: GUN FOR HIRE".

NICK THE SAINT
 Nevermind the gun for hire... it's
 an old card, but the name still
 works. Searchin' for a new motto
 now... one with a lower body count.
 (thinking twice)
 But then again, ya can't turn a new
 leaf if ya've already burned 'em
 all. Right?

LUCKY
 (faint smile)
 So where do you go now?

NICK THE SAINT
 I head east. Catch up on some
 reading. Maybe look into real
 estate... I think I could make a
 killing.

Nick cringes as Lucky gives him a bear hug. He begrudgingly,
 and painfully, returns with a pat or two.

LUCKY
 Who are you really, Nick?

NICK THE SAINT
 Me? I'm just a bad guy tryin' to
 make some good of the world.
 (considering)
 At least I hope to someday.

Nick painfully climbs into the cab.

LUCKY
 This is the end I take it?

NICK THE SAINT
 For now.
 (final nod)
 Best wishes, pal. I pray you'll
 find the right streak to tread on
 until we meet again.

LUCKY
 I'll damn well try.

Nick hesitates. He removes a receipt from his pocket and
 hands it over to Lucky. It reads: \$50,000.

NICK THE SAINT
 Here's your receipt.
 (off Lucky's stare)
 Pain and grievance.

And with that, Nick shuts the door.

NICK THE SAINT
 Let's roll, Deli.

We stay on the cab as it departs, tracing aerially as it races from the city, across the Fiasco Bridge, and disappears into a misty fog that carries it from sight.

ON LUCKY

He crumples the receipt -*then*- tosses Nick's card to the wind.

LUCKY

I think my streaks are already changin'.

AND, IN A QUICK CUT:

INT. CASINO '69 - **PRESENT NIGHT**

Here we find DOYLE sitting at a ROULETTE TABLE with **FIVE** other players seated alongside him.

LUCKY

And that, my degenerate fuckin' friends, is how I found salvation.

ROULETTE PLAYER #1

So, what now Lucky?

On that note, Lucky pushes a stack of blue bills onto **BLACK #5**.

LUCKY

Now? Well now... I let it ride.

AND HE GIVES US THAT LUCKY SMILE ONE LAST TIME.

the end...