

FIASCO HEIGHTS

Written by

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FIASCO HEIGHTS

OVER BLACK:

LUCKY (V.O.)
It always starts with a bang.

BOOOOOOM!

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. A classic disguise reminiscent of the evil genius who vandalized streets and strapped innocent girls to railroad tracks.

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 - **NIGHT**

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 nearby table, 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 DRAGON 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 - because it belongs to 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...

LUCKY (V.O.)
Stop.

SCENE FREEZES: DEBRIS PAUSING IN MID-AIR.

LUCKY (V.O.)
I might need to explain this.

SMASH CUT TO:

INT. COMMUNITY SHOWER ROOM - **NIGHT**

A single light bulb sways from the ceiling, flickering intensely. And just BELOW IT...

WHAM! Some poor sap wearing a BATH ROBE takes a crushing hook to the jaw. **WHAM!** A spray of warm DNA spits across the room. **WHAM!** Another. Just keep the punches coming. Bloody. Gritty. Brutal.

VICTIM slumps against the ropes tying him to a swivel chair. Note: each of the chair's legs is drilled into the floor. That way, it doesn't tip over while SIX BRUTISH POLICE OFFICERS continue fist-fucking this guy's face into ground beef.

SCENE FREEZES: JUST AS A FEW TEETH GO AIRBORNE.

LUCKY (V.O.)
All right. I guess I'll need to explain this too. So let's just start from the beginning.

SMASH CUT TO:

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.

Soon, **A TAXI CAB** races from the city like a predator out for its nightly rounds. We follow the cab from an aerial view as it races across the barren highway.

LUCKY (V.O.)
It's a dead end turn with no end in sight...

INSERT: A SERIES OF BLACK & WHITE CRIME SCENES CUT AT THE SPEED OF MUZZLE FLASHES.

LUCKY (V.O.)
Right and wrong are afterthoughts here. Everyone's decked in the same dark shade of gray...

INSERT SERIES OF FLASH CUTS:

- A DRY CLEANER nods as the clothing track parts to reveal FIVE MOBSTERS counting money in the back room.

LUCKY (V.O.)
The cleaners.

- A PHARMACIST hands us a bottle of pills over the counter.

LUCKY (V.O.)
The dealers.

- AN OFF DUTY COP pops his cruiser trunk to reveal a wealth of stolen arms. PRICE TAGS on everything.

LUCKY (V.O.)
The door-to-door salesmen.

- A GARBAGE MAN collects a stack of money from a friendly housewife. His truck lifting a trash bin in the background... HER DEAD HUSBAND'S CORPSE DROPS FROM IT.

LUCKY (V.O.)
And the guys who take out the garbage.

BACK ON THE CAB: A stroke of lightning streaks across the sky outlining the city in raw illumination.

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.

LUCKY (V.O.)
And here, the angels fall faster than the raindrops.

INT. TAXI CAB - **NIGHT**

THE CABBIE takes a swig of coffee slush and slicks back his thinning hair. He's a bit of a slob, but who's judging?

LUCKY (V.O.)
The cycle is as endless as it is vicious. It begins here. It ends here. And a whole lot'a people die in between.

SMASH TITLE: FIASCO HEIGHTS :ROLL TITLE

EXT. THE LAST CHANCE DINER - **NIGHT - ESTABLISHING**

Still raining. Wind ripping across the open road. And all we can make out is a flashing NEON SIGN in the distance.

"**LAST CHANCE**"

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

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

A torn up jukebox struggles to play SINATRA'S *Moon River* over the hiss of sizzling bacon and fresh ground coffee. Linoleum shining from every angle - this place is straight out of a "Leave it to Beaver" marathon.

We dolly through booths of dining patrons, none of which are touching their food. Instead, every eye in the joint is staring towards the rear of the diner. It's dead silent... well, all except for the CRASHING and POUNDING and KICKING and CRYING coming from the men's room.

INT. MEN'S ROOM - LAST CHANCE DINER - **NIGHT**

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

FLASK
Fuck! I told ya once and a thousand fuckin' times, I ain't seen the 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. This guy's drowning in a pool of his own sweat.

FLASK
(choking on blood)
Dear Father, who art in heaven,
hallowed by thy...

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 got nothing to do with that broad! Nothing!
(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. Last I heard, that's where she headed. But I'd start lookin' for another prom date, pal, chances are she's already dead. You go there, you won't find nothin' but heartbreak. The permanent kind.

KILLER PULLS THE HAMMER BACK NOW.

Flask looses 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 -- I gotta wife. This is gonna be hard on them... God, please look after my boys.

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.

BAM!!!

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

SCENE FREEZES: on Nick's vicious glare.

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 TO:

INT - FIASCO CITY MORGUE - NIGHT

Camera PANS across a row of CADAVERS. Blue. Stiff. Each of them atop examining tables with VISIBLE TOE TAGS.

#1. **CASANOVA DIEGO GONZALEZ**. A CUBAN MAN. Dark hair with frosted tips.

#2. **"GIGGLES" VAN MORISSEY**. Huge grin still plastered to his mug. Entire torso covered in SMILEY FACE TATTOOS.

#3. **FRANKIE "THE BARBER" BAMBONI**. Still dressed in his barber get-up. A hideous toupee sliding off his scalp.

LUCKY (V.O.)
 Casanova. Van Morissey. The Barber.
 Nick sent 'em all to the morgue
 first class on a one way ticket.

BACK TO SCENE:

UNFREEZE: As 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 - NIGHT

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**

Streaks of blue neon outline Nick's face in sharp flashes as he adjusts the fit of his Fedora and steps into the pouring rain. He waits for a moment, until...

HEADLIGHTS. Our 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 guy?

NICK THE SAINT
Fiasco Heights. Cheapest hotel you know.

Cabbie turns to his fare.

CABBIE
You sure you wanna go that road?
They don't call this the Last
Chance for nothin'.

Nick jars the rain from his overcoat.

NICK THE SAINT
I'm sure.

Cabbie flips the windshield wipers and pops into drive.

CABBIE
Well. Consider it a fare's warning.

FOOT HITS THE GAS - ENGINE REVVS - TIRES SQUEAL - RUBBER BURNS

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

NICK THE SAINT
More rain? It was raining when I
left this shitbox a year back.

CABBIE
Least twice a day now. Friggin' place
is a flood with traffic lights.
(beat)
What brings ya 'round again,
business or pleasure?

Nick scopes out the cab and gets comfortable. He whips out A SILVER LIGHTER and fires up a fresh cigarette.

NICK THE SAINT
Business.

CABBIE
What kind a' business?

NICK THE SAINT
Mine.

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

Nick tightens his lips into a slight grin, smoke slowly dispelling between them. He leans down and picks up a crumpled newspaper from the floor.

ANGLE ON: THE FRONTPAGE OF THE PAPER. Headline reads, "FLAVOR OF THE MONTH" above a black and white photo of TWO DEAD BODIES. Both appear to be frozen stiff.

CABBIE
(re: headline)
Clean hits. New body count high according to city records. They think it's some fuckin' ice cream guy - goes by the name Mr. Frosty. Adds a new flavor to the menu for every vic he puts on ice. Ain't that somethin' sick?

Passing a sign:

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

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

CABBIE (CONT'D)
In other news, Tony Fingers got waxed yesterday. His whole 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.

Nick tosses the paper on the floor.

NICK THE SAINT
Ice cream guys. Dead kingpins. It's all peaches and cream to me, pops.

The cab hugs another curve, brakes riding heavy this time. Nick puts his cigarette out against the leather.

CABBIE
I tell ya, you gotta have guts to make it in this town. And they'd better be bulletproof if ya know what I mean. I were you, I'd have me turn this ride around.
(MORE)

CABBIE (cont'd)
 Otherwise, I'm just takin' ya to a
 bed and breakfast six feet under.

Nick leans forward as the cab *CROSSES THE FIASCO BAY BRIDGE.*

NICK THE SAINT
 Ya know what, driver? I've changed
 my mind... I do like you after all.

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

NICK THE SAINT
 Fine, Deli, that business I was
 talkin' about... just happens it's
 the unfinished kind. I'm here to
 find a missin' dame, and kill
 anyone whose laid a goddamn hand on
 her between now and then.

(beat)
 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.

Cab passes along FIASCO'S TONIC REEF. Oddly constructed piers
 and wharfs litter our view.

DELI
 So what do they call you, friend?
 Ain't nothin' more important than a
 name. Like a calling card that
 don't need callin' out.

NICK THE SAINT
 (hesitant)
 I like names too, Deli. And killing
 people who got 'em.
 (beat)
 I'm Nick. Nick the Saint.

Driver immediately angles the rear view into the back seat.

DELI
 As in *the* Nick the Saint? The most
 cold blooded trigger this town's
 ever seen? Nah, you ain't serious.
 Word on the street is that you were
 a pale horse. Dead as nails!

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

Cabbie turns back now, confounded.

DELI
 Jesus H. Washington! I feel like
 I'm talkin' to a ghost here.

NICK THE SAINT
 (smiles)
 Maybe you are.

SMASH CUT TO:

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

INSERT SUB: **"ELSEWHERE"**

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.

FREEZE SCENE: ON DOYLE'S SMILING FACE.

SLAM SUB: **LUCKY DOYLE**

LUCKY (V.O.)
 And this is 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...
 Lightning Suckerpunch.
 (beat)
 But I did learn a few things off
 the beat.

INSERT SERIES OF FLASHBACKS:**EXT. TWIN'S EYE MOTEL - NIGHT #1**

Some GUY pile-drives a WOMAN on all fours, just going to town like a 10-speed oil drill. Outside, Lucky snaps away with his camera. He's probably gone through a roll or two by now.

LUCKY (V.O.)
First. If you think your guy is cheatin', he probably is.

INT. TWIN'S EYE MOTEL - NIGHT #2

And now, we're watching a DIFFERENT WOMAN riding some guy under the sheets. Her expression nothing short of pure ecstasy.

LUCKY (V.O.)
Second. If you think your gal is cheatin'...

As the covers pull back, we realize it's LUCKY she's nailin'.

LUCKY (V.O.)
...Then don't hire me.

INT. ST. CHARLES CATHOLIC CHURCH - FLASHBACK #3

Lucky shakes hands with a an old CATHOLIC PRIEST...

LUCKY (V.O.)
Third. Never. Never. Never, borrow money from any organization that takes pleasure in making martyrs.

...who hands over a stack of hundred dollar bills.

BACK ON: LUCKY'S ONLY HALF-WAY SMILING FACE.

LUCKY (V.O.)
So here I am, stuck in first gear & double overtime. Losing streaks like mine only come in fatal doses, and I'm comin' down with a fever.

INT. CONFESSIONAL BOOTH - DAY

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 (from montage), an elderly priest with graying hair and a moustache to match.

FATHER PISARRO
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. Should be a sure thing - I
hear there's a patsy in the ring.

Father Pisarro shakes his head in disgust.

FATHER PISARRO
The house doesn't make loans. It's
policy. And that comes straight
from the top. 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 - RIPPING him from the confessional AND slamming him against the wall. Father Pisarro stands behind the monster.

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. But know this, if you're not grinnin' by the final round, Pope's gonna give you a Judas neck massage.

The Pope drops Lucky. He falls to the ground like a twisted cement bag.

LUCKY
Alright Father. I get it.

The Pope picks Lucky up and begins dragging him to the door.

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

ANGLE ON: Lucky being dragged across the purple carpet.

LUCKY (V.O.)
Every bet in Fiasco goes down in the "good book". And if you don't pay out, your page is erased.
Instant excommunication.

INSERT: A CUTAWAY OF THE RAWLEY RIVER. Quiet. Still. A peaceful current.

LUCKY (V.O.)
That's the Rawley River. Prime source of holy water and home of the St. Charles Catholic Retreat for Sinners.

CAMERA SUDDENLY DROPS BELOW SURFACE TO REVEAL A WEALTH OF **BODYBAGS** DECORATING THE SANDY FLOOR.

LUCKY (V.O.)
Let's just say the place ain't known for great fishin'.

BACK ON: Lucky is lifted by the collar, carried passed a HOLY WATER HOT TUB (which is at full capacity by the way) and THROWN OUT THE DOOR.

SFX OVER SCENE: DING. DING. DING.

SLAM CUT TO:

INT. BOXING ARENA - **NIGHT**

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

In the 11th 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 as the ref calls the fight. It's wall to wall cheers as the underdog 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. I'd just booked a deep sea dive
in the Rawley. Go fuckin' fish.

Lucky closes his eyes and takes a deep breath. Then, in a sudden act of last resort, he rockets out of his seat and hauls ass down the aisle. He knocks a few popcorn/soft drink vendors out of the way and rushes for the exit.

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

INT. BOXING ARENA - ATRIUM - **NIGHT**

Lucky skids around a corner, and straight into the most gorgeous blonde we'll see for the next 90 minutes. He plows over her, knocking her purse across the floor.

LUCKY (V.O.)
But this is when I really run 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.

SLAM SUB: "TROUBLE"

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

UNFREEZE: As Lucky quickly reaches down to grab a few of her spilled belongings.

LUCKY
Really sorry, lady.

HOPE
Just watch it, will ya.

He hands over a pack of Virginia slims, some lipstick, then returns to a dead sprint.

CUT TO:

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. Other then a few bums, there's nothing but the stench of stagnant urine. The priests go back inside.

Slowly, Lucky steps out of hiding 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 TOWN CAR PULLS INTO THE ALLEY.

Lucky ducks back down just as A FEW MYSTERIOUS FIGURES leave the arena. He peeks up to catch our girl, Hope, getting forced inside the vehicle. She's whining, whimpering.

Lucky comes up for air as the town car pulls away. Reading the license plate numbers aloud before it disappears...

LUCKY
10K QJ1
(to bum)
That's a royal flush.

SMASH CUT TO:

INT. THE LIP LOUNGE - DRESSING ROOM - **NIGHT**

WHACK! NICK bitch-slaps a repulsive jazz club manager across the face with a violin. Three strings pop on impact.

The manager falls backward holding his face. He's a greasy slimebag, ratty hair. Face scarred from years of acne.

Looks like he's been sweating for a week straight. This is SWEATS POLINO, and hygiene doesn't exist in his vocabulary.

SWEATS

Doughboy's gonna shit cinder blocks when he hears you're back! He still thinks you're ashes. Dead as the nails they put in your coffin.

(cough)

It really pissed him off, you tryin' to leave without sayin' goodbye. Just fuckin' rude.

NICK THE SAINT

Where's the girl, Sweats? I know she's here. You seen her?

SWEATS

He'll have a hit out on your ass before his bedtime snack. Didn't ya know, Doughboy is the most powerful boss 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 recess anymore. We're big time now. Our guns are pullin' in five figures a job - our gals can triple that on the right corner. We're turning over more coke, more heroine, and more smiles than a fuckin' happy meal. There's power behind us guys now, Nicky. Power of the purest kind. So, you have no idea the shit you're steppin' into by whackin' on me with a fuckin' violin. I'm a made guy here!

WHAM! Nick smashes the violin to splinters across his face.

NICK THE SAINT

Next you'll say you can make pussy wet just by winkin' at it.

(focused)

Where is she? Where's Hope?

SWEATS

(laughing)

Hope? You really care about some glossed up dame? YOU'RE. SO.

FUCKED. <cough><cough><cough>

(MORE)

SWEATS (cont'd)
 And your little valentine's gonna
 get fucked right alongside ya.
 <cough> <cough> <cough>
 Can't you see, she's playin' ya,
 Saint. Like a puppet on chain-link
 wires.

Blood begins pouring down Sweats' nose. Nick tosses him a handkerchief from a nearby vanity table.

NICK THE SAINT
 Here... you're leakin', Sweats. I
 think I busted a pipe or two.
 (beat)
 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.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. LIP LOUNGE KARAOKE CLUB - MOMENTS LATER

The nightclub is dimly lit. A classy 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. His body goes limp as she turns to us with a seductive gaze, winks, and blows a kiss right to the camera.

CAMERA HURLS BACK TO THE BAR where Nick chips away at a cocktail like a programmed alcoholic. He stares at her -- just for a few seconds, but it only takes her one 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 -DRAGON TATTOO ON HIS NECK- giving Nick some attention of his own. He's flashy. Stylish. A celebrity as far as gangsters go. That means he loves high profile gigs and the media that follows them. 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? He's big
time 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 goes for McBanister's booth.

AT McBANISTER'S BOOTH

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

MCBANISTER
Hiya Nick. Welcome back. 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 click 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 whatdaya 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.

Nick slides a POLAROID PHOTO across the table. And, the woman in the photograph is none other than... HOPE CAUFIELD (our hot gal from fight night).

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)
I ain't seen her.

McBanister starts to get edgy as his lady wraps her set.

MCBANISTER
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 thrown in the wrong drink with the wrong folks. Now she's thin air with no tracks to follow. Just disappeared 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 mormon 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 Sea,
 and worth every fuckin' nickel.

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 THE SAINT
 For now.

MCBANISTER
 Then scram, before I cause a ruckus.

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. As Nick exits...

THE STAGE CURTAIN RISES

And now, LUCKY DOYLE brushes his fingers across the ivory of a grand piano. He begins playing it up for a packed house. The crowd claps -- they fucking love him.

LUCKY (V.O.)
 On Tuesdays, I fingered ivory at
 this decked down jazz joint off
 Grand. Isn't a great gig, but it
 helps cover all you can eat sevens
 at the craps table.

Lucky strokes a cord and nods to his saxophone player. Applause erupts. He takes a pull off a glass of bourbon then dives into another song - fingers moving so fast you'd think this was a b-team version of Liberace.

LUCKY (V.O.)

It was a good crowd. Well, all excluding the three gents at table 8 waitin' to plug me of course.

WE ZOOM AROUND TO TABLE 8 - CAMERA ROTATES, FREEZING ON EACH GANGSTER - BRANDING THEM AS **#1, #2, and #3**.

LUCKY (V.O.)

They call 'em the God Squad. 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 led shower ever since my checks turned to rubber and I bounced at the big fight.

Sweat lines the wrinkles in Lucky's brow as we come to the end of his performance -BUT- he quickly segues into an encore of the same song. This is stalling at its finest.

BACK ON: The gangsters patiently waiting at their table.

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. Most fellas take him for a daisy, but that's why they're dead.

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 biggest thugs you'll ever lay eyes on.

LUCKY (V.O.)

And you've already met this ugly son of a bitch.

BACK ON: Lucky in the middle of the SAME EXACT SONG. It finally comes to end. The saxophone player stops as Lucky tries to encore for a third time.

SAXOPHONE
Hey... We've done the encore three times now. My lips are numb.

Lucky gives a sharp "FUCK YOU" stare to his partner.

LUCKY
If you don't play it again, Sam,
I'm gonna shove that sax so far up
your ass, you'll have to pop the
spit valve to take a leak.

The saxophonist leads into another encore. But suddenly...

HE DROPS like a ton of bricks on gravity. Lucky quickly looks up to see Pinstripes aiming a SILENCED GUN, and it sends a fierce ripple down his spine. Twice.

THE CROWD GOES BALLISTIC. SERIOUSLY. THEY'RE OUT OF CONTROL.

Lucky dodges behind the piano as a few silenced shots rip through wood and wire. He kneels and closes his eyes.

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.

Lucky jumps off the stage, turns, and runs straight into the presence of his killers. He dodges left in what seems like a manageable escape -but- almost suddenly, he finds himself in 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

Lucky is tied to a chair atop the skyscrapers of Fiasco Heights. THE THREE GUNMEN dispersed around him.

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

PINSTRIPES
Hey Lucky, welcome to the last
night of your life.

LUCKY

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

PINSTripes

Time to settle up. No more scams.
No more deals. And no more of that
orphan paper you been throwin' at
us for the past decade. This time
we settle in cash.

LUCKY

I gotta have more time. 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.

INSERT QUICK MONTAGE:

- Lucky sits at a bar. FIVE shots lined in front of him.

LUCKY (V.O.)

Like the five shots of whiskey I
downed before the big fight.

- Lucky cheering in the stands at the boxing match.

LUCKY (V.O.)

The five minutes I actually
attended the big fight.

- Lucky's sitting on the port o'potty from earlier. He stares at five bullets and a revolver in his hands.

LUCKY (V.O.)

And the five bullets I stared at
for five hours after realizing I
lost my ass when it was over.

BACK ON: 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? What's the
one you "Let It Ride" on?

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

PINSTripes (CONT'D)

C'mon. Is it blackjack? Poker?
Maybe ya gotta fix on the Queen a'
Hearts?

Inhale. Exhale.

PINSTripes

I gotta game. I call it "Get Lucky". 'Course, you ain't got nothing to play with, so I guess we'rebettin' for your life.

LUCKY

I've got it! Just give me 'til...

Pinstripes cuts him off and removes a pair of dice from his pocket.

PINSTripes

See, I like dice. You know why I like dice? Because they don't lie. They can't lie. So in the spirit of games, and the fact that we like playin' 'em, whatever number these dice spit out... that's how many stories you'll dive from.

ZOOM POV: As Lucky glances over his shoulder. NOTHING BUT GRAVITY. A dangerous realization sinks in as he finds the legs of his chair AGAINST THE LEDGE.

LUCKY

Oh, shit.... Please! DON'T DROP ME!

Pinstripes shakes the dice in his hand, tauntingly.

LUCKY (CONT'D)

OKAY -- I'll get the 100 thousand!

PINSTripes

And when we gonna see it?

LUCKY

Tomorrow! I swear to ya.

PINSTripes

Bravo. 'Cause we don't wanna kill ya, Luck. You're an investment. That would be bad business. But if you don't have the juice by noon sharp, our little game goes sudden death.

He slaps Lucky, driving the point home.

PINSTripes

You get the drift?

LUCKY

Yeah.

PINSTripes

Good. 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, and nods to Jones...

PINSTRIPES
Give him the sleeping pill, Champ.

Lucky grits his teeth as Knockout steps up.

DING. DING. An imaginary bells sounds over scene while Jones winds up the right hook. Here it comes like a speeding...

SMASH TO:

EXT. CITY STREET - **CONTINUOUS**

...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, he slowly sits up to catch the wind that's been knocked from him. And that's the moment it hits him. Literally. A NEWSPAPER slaps him square in the face. He peels it off to reveal a picture of the robbed SAVINGS & LOAN.

INSERT MONTAGE OF FLASHING NEON:

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

"THE FIASCO HOTEL"

INT. BEDROOM - FIASCO HOTEL - **DUSK**

ROLLING SUB: **"THEN"**

TWO BODIES move in perfect cadence under the sheets. Shadows shifting across the ceiling in steady motion.

Suddenly, a LATINO WOMAN rises from the sheets straddling Nick. She moans aggressively. Bodies grinding. Harder now. And as she comes, we...

TIME CUT: **"NOW"**

... to Nick sitting on the edge of the bed, buckling his pants. His temporary female companion cradles him from behind.

Nick sets the POLAROID OF HOPE atop the night-stand.

NICK THE SAINT
Harley, I need the word out on this
mug. She went MIA and I'm lookin'
to find her. 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
Is this the one from...

NICK THE SAINT
Yeah. That's the one.

Nick grabs his shirt - he continues dressing.

HARLEY moves into the light. The body, the lips... she'd be perfect if not on double overtime.

HARLEY
What's this all about, Nicky? Say ya came back for me, and not just another good lay to notch up.

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

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

HARLEY
I loved 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.
(angry)
You used to be a classy hustle, Harley. Then I leave town and you lift your skirt like a fuckin' sunroof. Every fella on the block's tasted your love potion by now... spread ya like a stick of butter.

Harley shoves Nick off of the bed.

HARLEY
I thought you were dead, Nick!
(crying now)
You've known me for a lifetetime.
Don't treat me like I'm some cheap trick doing 9 to 5.

NICK THE SAINT
You are cheap, Harley. And those tricks are all you've got.

Nick slides into his overcoat and goes for the door.

HARLEY
No matter how many guys I fool with, you're still the only man I've ever kissed.

He pauses momentarily...

NICK THE SAINT
Well. That's something.

...then opens the door and exits.

INSERT INVESTIGATION MONTAGE

SHOT: Nick shows the MUGSHOT to the garbage men. It's a "No".

SHOT: Talking to an albino with dreads at a pool hall. "No".

SHOT: At the dry cleaners. Bills whip through a counting machine as the clothing track parts. Mobsters all shake "No".

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

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

EXT. FIASCO AVENUE - DUSK

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

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

NEWSBOY
Extra, extra!! Savings and Loan
stripped clean. Vault goes bare in
sixty seconds. Fifth bank robbed by
villainous traveling show.

Nick grabs a paper and flips the kid a quarter. He adjusts his Fedora while browsing 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 FOUNTAIN - NIGHT

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 a card face up in his palm. It's the JACK OF HEARTS. He sighs and re-shuffles, it's obviously not what he wanted.

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

ANNE

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

NICK THE SAINT

It's okay. I needed a shower.

Anne (your "bubblegum gnawing", prototypical diner chick) slams the mug on the counter and plops in a scoop of ice cream.

ANNE

One root beer float. Your usual.

Nick has a seat and sets down the damp paper.

NICK THE SAINT

Thanks Anne.

ANGLE ON: THE PAPER. Same photo of the FISACO SAVINGS & LOAN that Lucky saw earlier. **HEADLINE READS:** "ENCORE, ENCORE".

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

Now, he slides a NEW POLAROID of Hope over the counter.

NICK THE SAINT

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

Lucky suddenly perks up in his booth -- he begins to listen.

ANNE

(re: photo)

Now that's a catch. She your's?

NICK THE SAINT

Once. Or twice.

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. A harsh melody that serves as an open invitation to any challenge.

ANNE

It's that lunatic ice cream
asshole. Has a dead eye for minors
if ya follow. The pervert.

Nick flips the paper to see FROSTY'S latest headline.

NICK THE SAINT
And free publicity.

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 his booth. The other patrons follow his lead and drop out of sight, holding their breath in hopes of pure silence. That is, everyone except for 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's lookin' for trouble.

NICK THE SAINT
Capitol "T".

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 stands and turns to the counter.

NICK THE SAINT
Anne. Gimme 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.
And she don't miss neither. Two
inch barrel could pinch a termite
in the ass if it was lookin' at ya
funny. 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 gun and flips the chamber. He watches it spin in his grip, then slings the chamber back into socket. Then he looks at Anne and loads the bullet.

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 the anticipation of a showdown.

INT. ICE CREAM TRUCK - **DAY**

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.

Frosty 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 - **DAY**

A DROP OF SWEAT BREAKS ACROSS NICK'S TEMPLE.

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

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 beaten up CONTINENTAL as led ricochets around him. Bullets everywhere! A haze of debris surrounds us as ammo hisses overhead.

Bits of shredded metal whiz by Nick's face. Shards of glass cascading over him as Frosty takes his cover apart. He ducks as...

POP! The tire explodes. Bullet holes just drilling the automobile's frame. Sparks ripping across the bumper as each led point drives deeper into this vintage classic.

Now, a pause... a momentary pause. The killer's weapon dispelling smoke into the atmosphere, its chamber churning aggressively. He admires his work, we can it by the sick glimmer in his eye.

Nick staggers to his knee. Engine smoking over his left shoulder. Glass still trickling from above. He uses the moment to gather himself, but 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.

SLOW ON: 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.

Nick holds the kid tight in his grasp -while- Frosty paints another fresh coat of bullet holes. Until...

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 bullet smoking from it. Blood trickles down his white apron as he falls. HARD.

Local children pour onto the street -- it's utter shock. 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. His overcoat flowing in the wind.

A SINGLE CAMERA BULB FLASHES.

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

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

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. FIASCO HOTEL - NICK'S ROOM - **NIGHT**

And we're back at The Fiasco Hotel -- kind of place where scumbags get nightly discounts and termites are rent free.

Nick enters his disheveled room. Crucifix hung over the bed. Choppy bits of neon light spilling through the blinds. The slow twirl of a ceiling fan cuts the shadows perfectly.

He grabs a bottle of whiskey off the mini-bar and takes a pull. Here's where we see the nerves shaken up from the showdown with Frosty. The Saint is human after all.

LUCKY (V.O.)
And this is where I come in.

And without anticipation...

LUCKY (O.S.)
I've seen this girl.

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

LUCKY
 I spotted her at a bare knuckle
 brawl last night. And I think I can
 help you find her.

Nick lowers the gun.

NICK THE SAINT
 Who are you?

LUCKY
 The name's Doyle. Lucky Doyle.

NICK THE SAINT
 Yeah, I've heard of you. 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 the wall -- gun firm to the back of his head.

NICK THE SAINT
 I hope you're not prone to lying.

LUCKY
 It's no fib! I seen her at that
 fight - she was gettin' shoved
 around by some mysterious figure.

NICK THE SAINT
 Did you get a face?

LUCKY
 No. Hence the "mysterious figure".
 (beat)
 Look. If I saw her again, I could
 definitely slip the tags on. Trust
 me, I never forget a face.

Nick lets Lucky go, but still keeps the gun trained on him.

NICK THE SAINT
 Why'd you break in here?

LUCKY
 I saw you at the diner earlier.
 Watched you put the heat to that
 chocolate-chipped fuck. Just
 thought that maybe we could strike
 a deal.

NICK THE SAINT
 Deal? So there's an exchange at the
 bottom of your glass?

LUCKY

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... one pocket full of miracles. 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 drives 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

Protection. For 24 hours. You keep my back clean, and I'll be your private dick to brush the streets with.

Nick takes another swig.

NICK THE SAINT

I'm listening.

LUCKY

I owe The Catholics fives stacks of high society, and they gave me 24 ticks to come up shinin'. You keep me alive until I can say "payback", and I'll finger your bad guys.

NICK THE SAINT

Catholics? Rough crowd. They put a trinity on your heel?

LUCKY

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

(beat)

So, 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.

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.

Lucky has a despondent moment while Nick grabs a towel from the bathroom door.

NICK THE SAINT
Here. Freshen up.

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

LUCKY
I can't believe you were about to shoot me. That was traumatic.

NICK THE SAINT
You broke into my room. Were you expecting a firm handshake and meaningful conversation?
(a beat)
Besides, I didn't do it.

LUCKY
You're a real sweetheart.

NICK THE SAINT
Yet.

Nick loads a DESSERT EAGLE and tucks it under the pillow of his bed. Then he removes a GLOCK 31 from his sock drawer and holsters it along with "The Special". Lucky just watches.

NICK THE SAINT
Now that we're done swappin' details, there are just a few things I'll need to go over.
(ADD)
I'm famished. Do you like Thai?

INT. ELEVATOR - NIGHT - 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
\$100,000... right?

LUCKY
Right.

NICK THE SAINT
Wrong. You have 21 hours. I break
for breakfast, lunch and dinner.
During those times, you're solo.

The doors shut.

EXT. HOTEL PARKING - NIGHT - 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 my puzzle.
(he stops at valet)
I don't have a car. You drive.

INT. LUCKY'S RIDE - NIGHT - CONTINUOUS

Nick and Lucky driving in a beat up clunker, absolute shit...

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 - NIGHT - 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 we're involved.
It's called trust. And if you break
that trust, our contract becomes
null and I walk.
(to hostess)
Hi. Reservation under Weinberg.

INT. RESTAURANT BOOTH - NIGHT - 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. If you have an aversion to that clause in any form... tough shit.

Lucky forces a smile and downs a glass of 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

Well. That whole pain & grievance thing? I'm expecting to get shot at, quite a bit actually, so your fee could add up to 1/3 of my debt.

(thinking)

Do you have a payment plan?

NICK THE SAINT

Yes. You pay when I say you pay.

LUCKY

I can live with that.

NICK THE SAINT

Good. Then you've got a deal. I'll be your rear view until we find the dame.

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"?

NICK THE SAINT

Don't know. For someone who kills people, I guess I'm just a really nice fuckin' guy.

LUCKY

There're rumors about you. 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.

LUCKY

You ain't some chump with an itchy finger. That's all I'm sayin'.

NICK THE SAINT

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

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

NICK THE SAINT

So. Where do we start?

CUT TO:

EXT. BLACK MARKETPLACE - NIGHT - CONTINUOUS

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.

LUCKY

Who is this girl anyway?

NICK THE SAINT

Long story. Let's just find her before I read you the bio.

Lucky nods and turns to FRONTPAGE LOU. An older guy, mid-fifties, sits reading an issue of *LIFE MAGAZINE*.

LUCKY
Frontpage Lou. What's the news?

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

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

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

Lou turns over the sports section of the most recent paper.

LUCKY
Thanks. I actually came for somethin' else, Lou...

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 the numbers for me?

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

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

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

LUCKY
But Lou, 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

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

Fuck.

LUCKY

Fuck.

Nick puts a hand on the cement truck as the Puerto Ricans order him to step over the wet sidewalk, and into the dark. And what we'll notice... is that he has casually left a SMALL BLINKING DEVICE 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? 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 the page 1. Headline reads: "THE SECOND COMING: SAINT RETURNS".

THE MORMON
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. This is serious, and about to get interesting.

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. 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 cement. NONE OF THEM CAN MOVE FAST ENOUGH, turning in what seems like 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
FRICK MY ASS! I can't believe...

NICK THE SAINT
Just 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)
There's bound to be more of them,
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**

On the street, Lucky hunches over to catch his breath.

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

Nick turns to his pathetic (and unlikely) 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
continue 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 TROLLEY

Nick hops onboard and lifts Lucky up - a supped up TUDOR only a few yards behind and gaining.

Lucky pans the trolley... THE 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.

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

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

VROOOM - THE TUDORS ARE CLOSING IN FROM BEHIND.

Nick grabs a hand rail and leans off the trolley. HE UNLOADS HELL into the first vehicle. No luck. Time to focus. He steadies -- finger taught on the trigger -- and fires...

CRACK! The bullet pierces the windshield. DIRECT HIT! The driver's head goes off like a pinata. Tudor spins out of control - tires giving way - and flips across the pavement.

Nick smiles as the vehicle 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 trolley. Nick fires across the interior, but he only gets one shot off before TUDOR #3 speeds up on the left. HE'S FLANKED!

NOW - Nick steps into the middle of the trolley, reloads. He takes in a breath of sheer valiance -THEN- aims both guns in opposite directions and goes to work. **BAM. BAM.**

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

Force alone rips us from the main line and jars the small trolley right off its track. Live electricity spews from an underground conduit as the car goes free-wheeling down the hilly streets of central Fiasco.

BAM! GUNFIRE CONTINUES RAGING FROM THE ROGUE TROLLEY. **BAM!**

TUDOR #3 pulls back and falls in behind the trolley. A MARKSMAN steps onto the exterior floor panel and readies a TOMMY GUN in his grasp.

Nick continues firing - THE TROLLEY PICKING UP SPEED NOW - senior citizens screaming as the runaway cable car crashes through a string of parking meters. Then...

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

No more games. Saint edges around the back of the trolley and takes the winning shot. An element of surprise at full vantage as his bullet takes the Marksman's hat off, just happens most of his head is still in it.

TUDOR #3 swerves violently, then regains speed.

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

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

HANGMAN'S PARK

HE SIGNS THE CROSS...

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

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 trolley explodes over the cobblestone breaking 100.

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

NICK'S POV ON: THE BREAK LINE HANGING FROM THE EXIT PANEL.

Nick pushes forward, velocity working against him as the trolley goes red on the speedometer.

AND WE'RE COMING TO A BODY OF FROZEN 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, THE THIN EMERGENCY WIRE DANGLING FROM THE EXIT PANEL.

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

NICK GRABS THE WIRE -AND- RIPS IT BACK! Pads grind as the trolley digs into the dirt. We're slowing. Slowing. Slowing. Until...

SMASH! The Trolley ping pong between two oak trees and slams into a log. Inertia hits like a crushing stab in the back as the cable car lifts into the air, sailing forward... and lands on the ice like a hulk of iron. Now, all passengers are thrown forward as the trolley SPINS OUT OF CONTROL....

TUDOR #3 pursues down the hill and onto the ice - firing from behind the turning trolley.

SCREAMS from every angle as the trolley spins at 360 degrees with speed gaining. Nick holds his composure and continues to fire at the final Tudor, opening a new line of sight every time the trolley makes a full rotation.

TUDOR GLIDES ACROSS THE ICE DODGING BULLETS - GETTING CLOSER!

And TUDOR #3 slams into the rear of the trolley, knocking Nick over the rail and onto the Tudor's hood. THUD. Soon, the car loses control -and now- TUDOR #3 is doing axles on the ice too. Both vehicles twirling a dangerous tango.

Nick slides down the hood and grabs onto the front grill. He tilts his gun over the hood and PUTS A FULL CLIP INTO THE WINDSHIELD. Brain matter sprays the windows as he puts a few passengers to rest. But then...

A FINAL THUG rises from the sunroof with a hot grenade in his palm, but -**BAM-** Nick puts him back in his seat before it has a chance to roll off his fingers.

Nick immediately drops from the grill - lands on his back - and puts his chin to the ice just as the Tudor glides right over him. He safely slides out from under it, as...

BOOOOOM! Chunks of ice go sky high as the Tudor detonates in a ferocious explosion 15 yards away. The pond shakes! Ice cracking now... everywhere... all around us.

Nick jumps up as the pond under him begins to give way. He attempts to tip-toe, carefully skipping over every new crack.

BACK ON LUCKY

Gritting his teeth as the trolley approaches the other side of the pond. THIS BUNDLE OF RUNAWAY NOSTALGIA IS HEADED FOR COLLISION. And here... it... comes...

ANGLE ON:

A FULL FRONTAL OF THE TROLLEY -- seconds before it slams into the embankment FIRING LUCKY THROUGH THE WINDSHIELD like regurgitated food. He hits the snow in a tremendous barrel roll, leaving a path of frosted leaves fluttering in his wake.

Now, a few of the passengers stumble off the catastrophe with minor cuts and bruises.

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

HEARING AID GUY
What?

Lucky brushes some snow from his jacket, and turns to see NICK UP TO HIS WAIST IN HANGMAN'S POND. He obviously didn't quite make it.

Lucky spits a ball of frozen dirt from his mouth and runs to pull Nick (chivering to the bone) from the water.

NICK THE SAINT
(teeth chattering)
D-d-don't shay a w-w-w-word.

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

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. OUR SHEPHERD OF PEACE - CONTINUOUS

A small cemetery. And just past it, Nick and Lucky stand at the foot of an enormous sanctuary. 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 midnight.

NICK THE SAINT
Sanctuary! Sanctuary!

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

MONSEIGNEUR
Nick? Nick the Saint, is that you?

NICK THE SAINT
I'm back, Monseigneur. And I
brought a vendetta back with me.
(beat)
I need to borrow some equipment.

INT. OUR SHEPARD 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.

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

MONSEIGNEUR
How about twins?

Nick grabs the guns -just before- the ridiculous ringtone to Lucky's cell goes off. He quickly hushes it, answers.

LUCKY
(into phone)
Lou, what's the headline?

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

NICK THE SAINT
Bless you, Monseigneur.

LUCKY (O.S.)
We've got the plates!

Nick turns to Lucky, undivided attention.

LUCKY
They're registered to one Patrick
McBanister. You know the guy?

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

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

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

SMASH CUT TO:

INT. TAXI CAB - **NIGHT**

SCREEECH! 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 we jumpin' the
tracks?

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

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

Lucky fastens his seatbelt...

LUCKY
Okay, so, I've got a few questions
in my pocket. Heavy questions.
Lemme kick-off by askin' who just
tried to kill you? Because now, and
this is just my assumption here,
but I'm pretty sure they wanna kill
me too.

NICK THE SAINT
That's the company I used to work
for. I retired early.

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

LUCKY
This is The Franchise we're dealin'
with here, pal. 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 these people
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. He buckles his seat belt too.

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

DELI
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 - WE'RE ALL SIDE STREETS FROM HERE.**

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

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

EXT. MCBANISTER'S PLACE - THE SUBURBS - NIGHT

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. This is 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 - NIGHT

The insides have been turned over. Every drawer, every shelf, every room has been ransacked like some burglars were in for a layover.

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.

Lucky enters to discover A BODY GUARD hanging from a ceiling fan, corpse circling the room from 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. Please!

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)
She has a case with her. Where is
it? I need it! Was she here!??!

McBanister shakes his head, YES.

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

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

MCBANISTER
Find...the... safe.

NICK THE SAINT
What safe?

McBanister struggles.

MCBANISTER
 Will never <gurgle> open.
 (and he smiles)
 Swa...swallowed <gurgle>... key.

NICK THE SAINT
 Where? What's inside?

And on the few remaining breathes he has left:

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

NICK THE SAINT
 Salvation?

McBanister shakes his head, YES again and for the last time.

NICK THE SAINT
 What does *that* mean?

But it's useless, we're not getting any more out of this dirtbag. He's gone. Blood trickles from his mouth.

NICK THE SAINT
 He's dead.

Lucky stares at the hanging bodyguard, churning.

LUCKY
 Join the club. There's dead folks
 decked all over the joint. This
 one's a great centerpiece -- really
 livens the place up.

Nick signs the cross over McBanister's body. Final Respects and all that jazz.

LUCKY
 What were they lookin' for? Must be
 somethin' of value. Value enough to
 hole punch that poor sap and dig
 for gold spots.

Nick walks over to the bookshelf - there's a book out of place. A GIDEON BIBLE. Nick opens it to the bookmark, where, we'll notice the cut-out of a skeleton key in it's pages.

NICK THE SAINT
 Salvation.

Now, Nick stoops down to find something of interest. And, "DING" ... THE WORD **CLUE** appears over AN EMPTY KETCHUP PACKET.

Nick looks it over. Touches it to his tongue.

NICK THE SAINT
 Ketchup.
 (beat)
 (MORE)

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

LUCKY
So we've got 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
You're gal and her goody bag?

NICK THE SAINT
Right.

NOW -- 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
Great. There's dirty bacon on the
menu...

CRACK. A WARNING SHOT RIPS THROUGH THE GLASS.

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 runnin'.

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 both swimmin'
in the same hot water.

CRASH -as- a GAS CANNISTER projects through the window. Nick watches as it hovers 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 cover their mouths and stay below the smoke.

NOW - FOOTSTEPS ON THE ROOF. Nick fires into the ceiling. WE HEAR A BODY **THUD**, SLIDE, AND DROP PAST THE WINDOW.

NICK THE SAINT
Not sure about you, but I don't
look good in frames. Let's get the
fuck outta here.

Nick tears open a breaker box on the wall and flips a fuse. He kills the lights. Well, all of them except for another BLINKING DEVICE that he'll attached above the front door.

NICK THROWS MCBANISTER'S BODY OVER HIS SHOULDER 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.
(beat)
You ever wire a car?

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

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...

BOOOOM! THE HOUSE GOES UP IN A BLAST OF BRICK AND SHINGLE. RED HEAD IS THROWN TO THE STREET, fire singing 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 TOWN CAR shatters the garage door and races through the debris. Nick grits his teeth behind the wheel and plows over every picket fence in the neighborhood. IT **SPEEDS** through a series of backyards at full throttle.

O'Toole jumps to his feet and signals to the platoon...

O'TOOLE
 Get headquarters on the line - I
 want all units on those raggidy
 fucks. Have back-up cut 'em off at
 the bridge.

And every squad car flashes to life.

INT. TOWN CAR - **CONTINUOUS**

Nick has the pedal to the floor. *CAMERA ZOOMS* into the rear of the vehicle as Lucky watches McBanister's corpse roll from side to side.

LUCKY
 Why did we save the corpse again?

Nick whips the town car into a 60 degree turn.

NICK THE SAINT
 Well, the good news is that there's a
 safe for us to crack, which may hold
 enough cash to square your sins.
 (speedometer at 90...)
 Bad news is that the dead guy
 swallowed the key, so you're gonna
 have to go divin' for it.

Lucky's eyes bulge to silver dollar size pancakes.

LUCKY
 Pardon? You want me to "dive in"?
 Why can't you get it?

NICK THE SAINT
 (annoyed)
 Please. Not while I'm driving.

Lucky stares at the corpse with complete disdain, as Nick tosses a leather glove into the back seat...

NICK THE SAINT
 There. Use that.

Righ on schedule, about 6 SQUAD CARS rip around the corner in hot pursuit. Lights flashing behind us in flashes of blue & red.

NICK THE SAINT
 And hurry!!

Lucky says "fuck" a few times in his head, and flips the body into a doggy-style position. He pulls the leather glove on snug -then- ankles McBanister. We can almost see tears as Lucky gazes into the dimpled bare ass bouncing in his face.

He extends his arm back, ready to thrust his hand in...

LUCKY
 Oh Jesus! Oh Jesus!

...Lucky punches forward just as we **SMASH TO:**

MASSES OF TAILING POLICE CRUISERS VROOMING PAST SCREEN. *SIX SQUAD CARS and 4 police MOTORBIKES speed with a vengeance.*

Nick races up an on-ramp that spits us right into the middle of an insane autobahn-like freeway. ROUTE 99 - a road that's never heard of speed limits.

Machine gun fire rattles across the townie's exterior, as Lucky throws his hand up. He's holding THE KEY.

LUCKY
I GOT IT!

BASH! A POLICE CRUISER RAMS US FROM THE RIGHT!

Town car swerves violently, then regains forward momentum. Nick steers out of it and pushes back. The cruiser goes wide proving that Nick has the bigger pair.

Now, we're coming up on the bridge -and- the police BARRICADE blocking us from it. The stationary officers ahead open fire, causing Nick to duck below the wheel.

ALL FOUR TIRES BLOW - sparks flying from the rims like ice skates on an asphalt rink. The car skids wide, plowing through a concrete median and flipping across three lanes of oncoming traffic. Metal grinding as it barrel rolls with sheer tenacity.

Smoke *HISSES* as the overturned town car settles. Nick checks to see how many ribs he's cracked - feels like three.

NICK THE SAINT
(to Lucky)
You okay?

LUCKY
No. Seems that so far, all that pain and grievance shit is yours.

Honk. Honk. Honk. Collisions ensue as every car on the road stops on a dime to avoid the wreckage. Fender benders chirping all around them like a catastrophic lullaby.

Nick pulls himself from the crash, helps Lucky. But the screams of police sirens only moments away as the chase changes directions.

NICK THE SAINT
Mission accomplished. I'm pissed.

Nick steps into the middle of the highway and fronts an enormous UPS-style DELIVERY TRUCK. It stops. He aims his gun at the ARAB DRIVER, forcing him out. Driver complies, of course.

Nick climbs in and pulls the clutch down. Lucky stumbles into the passenger seat. AND WE'RE OFF... AGAIN... WITH THE ENTIRE **52ND PRECINCT BACK ON OUR ASS.**

Wait. Nick hears a strange noise... IT SOUNDS LIKE TICKING.

He looks to A PACKAGE resting in the passenger seat beside Lucky. Lucky picks it up - shakes it - puts it to his ear. Fuck. Bad news... IT IS TICKING!

Lucky *heaves* the package out the window -AND- we stay on it as it sloshes beneath the grill of a pursuing cruiser.

BOOOOM! Metal twists as the cruiser goes up in two pieces. Glass scatters through the air like someone shook up a snow globe.

Nick smiles. For a second. The split second it takes him to hear... *tick, tick, tick, tick, tick*. And they both look over their shoulders to discover... THE ENTIRE TRUCK IS LOADED WITH TICKING PACKAGES!

Nick floors it as Lucky climbs into the back. He opens the cargo door -and- begins throwing packages into the road. Each detonating upon impact.

Another cruiser blows across lanes - a second is thrown into a series of grinding somersaults - then another. Lucky's creating a minefield of high octane fireworks, making it almost impossible to follow them.

Now, THE FOUR BIKERS weave to the front of the pursuing caravan. Each unstrapping a TOMMY GUN from their bikes.

Now, 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 turn-tables grabbing onto the rear view mirror -- his bike gets crushed as he lifts off.

Biker #2 punches through the passenger window and takes aim, however, Nick dives over and KICKS OPEN THE PASSENGER SIDE 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! **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 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 O'Toole ponies up his armored cruiser adjacent to Nick/Lucky. Our delivery truck getting shredded to pieces.

Truck dances across lanes, but live rounds from BIKER #1 keep us to the right. Suddenly, O'Toole's cruiser taps the rear bumper, more gunfire ensues. O'Toole smiles.

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 jumps the trailer. It disappears 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 about five shots in O'Toole's chest.

Nick dives back inside when the final biker sprays another round across the home. Spent ammo. A repeat performance.

INT. MOVING HOME - **NIGHT**

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 STRAPS BEGIN SNAPPING. Home leans, slowly tipping off the 16 wheeler. Nick braces himself in the door frame like there's an earthquake in progress.

NOW ON FREEWAY: A FULLY LOADED SEWAGE TANKER.

AND DON'T FORGET: THE CONSTRUCTION CARRIER WITH 6 CONCRETE CYLINDERS.

EXT. TRANSPORTABLE HOME - GARAGE - **CONTINUOUS**

A vertical garage door lifts, revealing a PINK CADILLAC parked inside (the kind your mom drives after selling Mary Kay for ten years). Lucky wires the engine and *REVERSES THE CADILLAC OUT OF THE TIPPING HOME - BACK ONTO THE FREEWAY.*

The house topples to the asphalt, and rolls in direct path of the SEWAGE TANKER. Tanker collides and sputters into a 90 degree skid. As it cuts perpendicular to the other lanes, THE CONSTRUCTION CARRIER has no choice but to carom into the tanker at full speed...

AN ERUPTION OF PISS & SHIT GOES SKY HIGH!!

WATCH OUT! THE CONSTRUCTION CARRIER hydroplanes across the piss slicked asphalt -and- slams into the median, sending all 6 concrete cylinders toppling onto the highway.

LUCKY

Ah hell!

Lucky weaves as the cylinders roll across the lanes. He's dodging perfectly, until of course the final cylinder rolls directly in front of us!

PINK CADILLAC CHUTES STRAIGHT INTO THE CYLINDER GOING 90 - TURNS UPSIDE DOWN AS IT ROLLS LEFT - AND GETS SPIT OUT ON ALL FOOURS THE NEXT LANE OVER.

DELI
HOOOOOOLY SHIT!

NICK THE SAINT
HOLY SHIIIIIT!

Nick signs the cross. Lucky tries too, but fucks the rotation.

And the Cadillac speeds into the clear....

LUCKY
Now what? Wanna blow up the
expressway?

NICK THE SAINT
Just drive. I got a feeling that
all roads lead to heaven. My gut
says the church is involved, so we
follow the straight n' narrow...

FADE TO BLACK:

SUPER:

A FEW MINUTES LATER

INT. CONFESSIONAL BOOTH - **DAY**

The confessional window slides open to reveal a bloodstained Nick pointing the .38 Special right at us. A bruised and battered 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 breaking 10 on the Richter. He shrieks as 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 messin'
 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 - pickin' up our strays, like
 Doyle here. Whatever got him killed
 had nothin' do with the church. He
 musta been swimmin' in high tides
 on his own agenda.

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

LUCKY
 You'll get the money.

Nick puts the gun to Pisarro's temple.

NICK THE SAINT
 Is there a girl mixed up in this?
 Girl named Hope?

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

Nick fires a shot into the wood beside Pisarro's face.

THE ST. CHARLES BOYS CHOIR, which has been practicing outside
 the entire time, CEASES TO HUM.

NICK THE SAINT
 McBanister said something before he
 fell asleep. "Salvation". What is it?

FATHER PISARRO
 Something that we all need, but
 never ask for. And if you go
 lookin' for it, you'll end up with
 nothin' but a handful of fire n'
 brimstone.

(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.

Nick looks Pisarro in the eye...

NICK THE SAINT
We'll pass.

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

Nick looks at Lucky with an acrimonious stare.

FATHER PISARRO
That can be arranged.

LUCKY
Then consider that we'll consider it.

Lucky turns to Nick with an optimist's smile.

NICK THE SAINT
Not a chance.

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

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 THAT THE ENTIRE ST. CHARLES BOYS CHOIR HAS SURROUNDED THE CONFESSIONALS.

Nick presses the gun 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.

Nick inches towards the door using Pisarro as a shield. Lucky tries to intimidate the choir boys with his 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.

INT. PINK CADILLAC - DAY

Both Nick/Lucky are covered in fresh gashes. 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?

NICK THE SAINT
Relax, we made it out alive. Barely.

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

Nick peers out the rain covered 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, and my gut says that's where our lines cross.

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 out of stock.

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

LUCKY
Easy for you to say. You're focused on some dame who was up to her neck in deep shit. Face the facts!

NICK THE SAINT

The only fact I'm starrin' down, is
that you're a five star, blue
ribbon, magna cum laude assfuck.

(beat)

Just hang onto that key until we
find the safe.

Nick turns up the radio, but Lucky turns it back down again.

LUCKY

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

Nick hesitates for a second, then gives in. He likes that
Lucky is finally showing some balls.

NICK THE SAINT

She disappeared a week back with
something that belongs to my
current employer. A briefcase - not
even sure what's in it.

LUCKY

Could it be the same thing the
church and Doughboy are dustin'
for? This salvation?

NICK THE SAINT

It's crossed my mind. But if so, I
don't think Hope knows what she's
into. I've got to find her before
she gets too deep in the deep end.

(beat)

I cared about this woman. Once.

LUCKY

Right, I know the song. She's a
keeper by you couldn't "keep her".
My gal ran off too. Threw me a curve
and took to an older fella. Lots a'
dollar signs in his wallet. It
happens, ya know?

(lifts flask)

So here's to broken hearts, and
dolled up dames who break 'em.

NICK THE SAINT

(irritated)

Keep tryin' to cheer me up, and
I'll slap the retarded right off
your face.

(beat)

I think she was kidnapped along
with the case.

Lucky is silent. He's not sure what to make of all this.

EXT. HAMPTON ALLEY - DAY

A cobblestone alley littered with an assemblage of junkies all huddled over timid 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 guys making their way through the crowd.

NICK THE SAINT
We're lookin' for a snitch named
Mother Goose. Used to hole up in the
local library - if there's somethin'
goin' down, he'll know.

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 Nick can speak..

MOTHER GOOSE
If ya came for a story, we closed.
I don't rhyme no more, my brotha'.

NICK THE SAINT
Here's a story. Once there was this
mean motherfucker, who turned some
scumbag's face to pulp. All because
he wouldn't share with the other
kids...

Nick slaps Goose across the face with his leather glove.

NICK THE SAINT
...So start rhyming, or my knuckles
get anxious.

LUCKY
Excuse me. Did you just slap this
man with a glove?

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

NICK THE SAINT
I've got an invisible dame, and a
key I can't put a lock to. It's
complicated math, but there's
"salvation" in the equation. What
do you know?

MOTHER GOOSE
I don't know shit! So fuck up and
off, man!

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,
 ducking the question, Goose!

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

MOTHER GOOSE

Aw-aight, chill man. Hands off the
 Mother fuckin' Goose.
 (holding cheek)
 Buzz in the air is that somethin'
 called "salvation" was lifted from
 the Savin's n' Loan. That's your
 sparrow - snatched up by some punks
 rentin' costumes by the hour. Bunch
 a' amateurs who love stealin' the
 show if ya dig.

NICK THE SAINT

I dig. What is salvation?

MOTHER GOOSE

Probably just a bogus name for
 somethin' big n' badass. Like end
 of the world type a' shit. Kinda
 shit you'd find in Pandora's attic.

(adjusts glasses)
 As fo' dames, there's too many to
 shake in this cum dump city. Best
 check the lost n' found, maybe
 she'll turn up.

(beat)
 THE END. That's all The Goose
 knows. An' there ain't na happy
 endin' on this motherfucka.

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

NICK THE SAINT

Anything else I should hear?
 Limerick. Haiku. Say it however...

MOTHER GOOSE

Look at ya, the prodigal ma'fuckin'
 son n' shit. He leaves a cold blood
 killer, returns a regular fuckin'
 Marlowe gone rogue rotten on
 hurtin' pills.

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

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

NICK THE SAINT
 Who robbed that bank, Goose?

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

MOTHER GOOSE
 Well, that's the hundred dollar
 question... isn't it, Spade?

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. SMOKIN' MOON NIGHTCLUB - **NIGHT**

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 female
 jazz singer begins a melancholy original.

LUCKY
 I bet she's lip syncing.

NICK THE SAINT
 She's not lip syncing.

LUCKY
 I bet she is.

NICK THE SAINT
 No. She's not. And why are you
 trying to bet anything? Were you
 raised under a power line?

LUCKY
 I think she's lipping, that's all.

NICK THE SAINT
 I wish you were lipping, but your
 perpetual articulation of gibberish
 clearly reminds me otherwise. Just
 stop talking, stop thinking, and
 stop fucking existing until I
 finish my drink. Please.

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.

HARLEY

And that's for stickin' me with the
hotel bill. You're no good, Nick!

NICK THE SAINT

Easy on the backhand, tootse. 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 patented 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 sap?

LUCKY

Doyle. Lucky Doyle.

NICK THE SAINT

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

HARLEY

What's got ya on the heel this time?

NICK THE SAINT

Bad religion. Catholics got him
down with clocks ticking. And the
plot thickens as I speak.

(inhale-exhale)

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's on the five behind. I'm
a martyr 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

(to Nick)

All this fuss over a few Catholic
fellas? Never knew you were soft in
the center, Nicky.

NICK THE SAINT

Sorry babe, breakfast in bed is as
soft as I go.

Harley hesitates for a second. Gives Nick another eye to eye.

HARLEY

All right. 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 the wall 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.

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 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 a stripper's ear. She takes a seat on his lap and leans back into him.

STRIPPER
(re: whisper)
Maybe.

Nick holds up a ten dollar bill. She grabs it fast enough to tell she's addicted to the color green.

STRIPPER
What do ya wanna know, boss?

NICK THE SAINT
A recent lift. Something of high value that's between transaction and open ended. Savings & loan type of gig.

STRIPPER
I know that gig.

Nick holds up another ten - she takes it.

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 and takes a pull off 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. The other night, he goes brass nuts over some bank job he scored big 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.
(MORE)

STRIPPER (V.O.) (cont'd)
 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. Black & white screen styled like early Movie Cine. It has a Chaplin-esque strobing picture. Let's begin:

- THE VAUDEVILLIANS STORM INTO THE BANK.
 CAPTION: "**ENTER THE VAUDEVILLIANS!**"
- COWBOY VILLAIN (WILDE) PUTS A GUN IN OUR FACE.
 CAPTION: "**LOOT UP THE BAG! THIS IS A ROBBERY.**"
- THE DUFFLE BAG BEING LOADED WITH CASH.
 CAPTION: "**THE MONEY IS \$TOLEN.**"
- MCBANISTER TURNS OVER THE VAULT.
 CAPTION: "**MCBANISTER EMPTIES THE VAULT.**"
- NOW, MCBANISTER FINDS THE CASE W/ THE CROSS ON IT.
 CAPTION: "**SALVATION.**"
- MASTERMIND VILLAIN BOWS TO HIS FEAR INDUCED CROWD.
 CAPTION: "**END SCENE MOTHERFUCKERS!**"

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 (HUGE/MUSCULAR)
 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 (MASTERMIND)
 (to Driver)
 Fuckhole's gonna get himself
 caught. 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 RATTY 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.

CUT TO:

EXT. ALLEY - BEHIND THE SMOKIN' 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, and a patch of fresh bruises.

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 make-over. 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! I'm so sorry it took that long to PUNCH my face, and THROW ME OUT OF THE CLUB!
(beat)
When this is all over, you'd better disappear like Houdini after a bad lay. Otherwise, I might kill you myself.

Nick stubbornly walks away.

LUCKY
Where are you going?

NICK THE SAINT
Well. You need 100 grand to stay alive. I need to rid myself of your presence. So, in consideration of the predicament, I guess that puts me in the whole, "Hey - we need 100 fuckin' grand" category.

LUCKY
Just so you know, I'm putting a complaint in the comment box. Your attitude sucks.

CUT TO:

INT. TRAILER - DAY

CLOSE ON: BILLY WILDE -in his cowboy hat- sips on 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 bag... 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

It's all there. I ain't spent a cent 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 the 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 boys is gonna flip that satchel.

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 BESIDE THE **FIASCO SAVINGS & LOAN CRIMESCENE**.

The entire **31st** Precinct has their weapons trained - THE DYED CASH dumped right on the pavement beside him.

WILDE DROPS HIS GUN upon the realization of being fucked.

CUT TO:

INT. PINK CADILLAC - **NIGHT**

Cue radio, Rudy Vallee's 1931 Brother, Can You Spare A Dime.

NICK THE SAINT
The girl, 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 flashing 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 - **NIGHT**

CLOSE ON: A METALLIC CASE CUFFED TO THE WRIST OF...

RON WONG LEE, an Asian greaser in an Armani suit. He enters the station and wanders through a maze of lockers. He stops at LOCKER #21.

Now, in one quick motion, Wong Lee removes a small pick, thrusts it into the lock, twists, and pops the locker open with ease. And inside, we're staring straight at...

THE BLACK CASE BEARING A RED CROSS... AKA "SALVATION".

Wong Lee switches out both cases, snapping the black leather case to his wrist. He exits. Never once realizing that NICK & LUCKY are watching every move from the 2nd floor balcony.

NICK THE SAINT
Blackjack.

ANGLE ON: The locker opening again, this time to the METALLIC CASE. And Nick reaches in, opening it to find a generous amount of hundred dollar bills stacked neatly & packed tight.

LUCKY
Jack-pot is more like it.

NICK THE SAINT
That was Ron Wong Lee. Otherwise known as Don Wong. He's a number cruncher for Doughboy. Looks like The Franchise has been funding that bank guzzlin' drama club all along.
(hands Lucky the case)
Here. You can use this to settle your sins. Feels heavy enough.

LUCKY
So, The Franchise has the case. But whoever tipped the bank swapped it to them for a low bid. Maybe it's just my private eye blinking here, but it doesn't feel right. Why would the robbers need money after stealing a lot of money? Huh?

NICK THE SAINT
Well if I knew who they were, I'd ask them personally.

Lucky removes his 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.

Then Lucky lifts a card from the deck. THE QUEEN OF HEARTS.

LUCKY

But maybe it means that your queen's still on the board, eh?

(changing subjects)

The hell do you think is in that case anyway?

NICK THE SAINT

Don't know, Mr. McGuffin, but it's probably something that goes boom.

LUCKY

Or ca-ching.

NICK THE SAINT

Either way, I don't give a damn what's in it, as long as there's Hope at the end of the tunnel.

LUCKY

So 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. Oriental ridges seem to glow within a blanket of red light that coats the air. It's almost mystical.

Lucky 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.)
Right. Well, 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. PINK CADILLAC - NIGHT

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 maybe 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 - NIGHT

Nick kicks in the door of room #5 and interrupts Wong Lee in mid-hummer. The hooker frantically splits -just as- Nick rests the shotgun barrel on Lee's chin.

NICK THE SAINT
I'll give you 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
But would you mind asking him to
drop 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
not... he haus only key.

Nick notices A FIRE AXE resting in a glass emergency box
outside the room. WE HOLD ON IT FOR A SECOND.

NICK THE SAINT
Wrong answer.

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, it's cake.

AND SUDDENLY...

A swift kick comes out of nowhere and puts him on knees. He
looks up to find CHINA DOLL #4 rushing him from the corner.
He lifts the shotgun...

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 - CHINA DOLL #7 JUMPS TO HER FEET:

She lunges forward as he lifts the shotgun, barrel driving into her chest and stopping 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 around him all the while. AND **POW...** Nick takes a shot to the temple. He stumbles back. AND **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, the girl behind him 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 being ripped from her scalp -but- she holds firm.

He struggles to his feet with the killer on his back, she's yanking harder than ever. His face loosing color. AND...

There. On a nearby counter, a plate of rotting CHINESE FOOD. Decomposed eggrolls, maggot infested mongolian beef... all combined to form the most disgusting platter in the history of Chinese cuisine. 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.

His 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. AND SUDDENLY...

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 -- then -- hits the ground face first.

The other girls jump back, pure panic. Each of them begins to cry profusely. Moaning. They each 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:

EXT. RED PALACE - **NIGHT - CONTINUOUS**

Nick/Lucky (and the case) are standing outside the Red Palace. The sound of the moaning China Dolls has subsided.

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?
(MORE)

NICK THE SAINT (cont'd)
 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.

Now, Nick holds up his thumb -and within seconds- A SLEEK,
 BLACK HEARSE zips to a stop against the curb.

The driver steps out, dressed in black from head to toe.
 Tinted sunglasses hide his glare. A fitted escort cap tilted
 atop his head. He nods to Nick.

MR. CLEAN
 How many?

NICK THE SAINT
 Seven. It's messy. May want to call
 the garbage guys on this one.

MR. CLEAN smiles arrogantly. He opens the back hatch and
 begins to mechanically slide AN EMPTY CASKET from the Hearse.

MR. CLEAN
 I think I can handle seven on my
 own, Nicky.

The casket slides onto the ground. IT'S ON WHEELS.

MR. CLEAN
 Just have to make a few trips.

NICK THE SAINT
 How much?

Mr. Clean calculates mentally...

MR. CLEAN
 Well, that's seven bodies at \$500 a
 stiff. These caskets aren't cheap,
 so you're lookin' at a few grand
 for parts and labor. Throw in the
 dumping fee, and I'd say you're
 comin' in with a total of \$7500...
 plus tip.

Lucky shakes his head in disbelief as Saint removes a wad of
 cash from the Metallic case. He divvies up.

NICK THE SAINT
 Your prices went up again.

MR. CLEAN
 Supply and demand, my friend.

Mr. Clean pockets his fee and rolls the empty casket into The Red Palace. Nick starts walking to the parked Cadillac.

LUCKY

What... Who was that?

NICK THE SAINT

The local cleaning guy. Like I said, I don't want anymore attention.

Nick tosses the "SALVATION" into the back seat, gives Lucky the metallic case packed with cold cash.

NICK THE SAINT

So, me and you... we're good, right? I mean, no more bullies?

LUCKY

I guess. Why?

NICK THE SAINT

Because our contract became past tense about an hour ago. And you've got the money to pay your debts.

Lucky sits 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'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

I made you bulletproof, and you helped me put the 2's together. That was the deal. Now you're safe, and I finally have some leverage here to tie loose ends. If Doughboy wants salvation, he'll have to pony up the girl.

Lucky shrugs -- shakes Nick's hand.

LUCKY

Deal's a deal. Thanks for the adventure. It was...

Nick nods -and- slaps Lucky on the shoulder.

NICK THE SAINT

Well. Good luck.

LUCKY
(already lonely)
With what?

NICK THE SAINT
Life. And all that shit.

And like that... Nick hops in the car and takes off.

TIME CUT TO:

EXT. ST. CHARLES CATHOLIC CHURCH - NIGHT

Lucky pulls into a "drive-thru" tithe deposit box at the Catholic Church. He squares his debts.

INT. CASINO '69 - NIGHT - MOMENTS LATER

Now, Lucky removes a roll of hundreds from his overcoat and lays it on a roulette table. The pit boss exchanges his chips -- Lucky puts it all on red.

LUCKY
Let it ride.

AND WE'RE CLOSE ON THE BALL AS IT DROPS ONTO THE WHEEL... SPINNING... SLOWING... HOPPING IN & OUT OF VARIOUS SLOTS... INTO **RED 5**... OUT OF **RED 5**... and into black 13.

PINSTripes (O.S.)
Now that's just the pits.

Lucky turns to find THE ENTIRE GOD SQUAD standing behind him.

PINSTripes
Cheers mate. How about we all go
for a pleasure cruise? Give him his
ticket, Champ.

Knockout Jones rears back for the hook.

LUCKY
Wait! My dues are paid.

PINSTripes
This ain't about that.

And suddenly, Pinstripes steps aside revealing **HOPE CAUFIELD** approaching behind him.

HOPE
Where's Nick the Saint? And where's
the 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. Cows strewn by the row. 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. Scratches. 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 - NIGHT

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 dabs 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. Momentum building...

Nick tears her blouse wide open, breasts barely cresting the suds. Passion ignites like brushfire. This is the kind of love you don't hold back on. Now...

Nick rips her dripping wet panties from the water. Kissing her rapid now, almost savage. The smell of sex in the air.

Harley's knees rise above the bubbles as she *thrusts* herself into Nick. SHE MOANS. Water slapping against the rim of the tub like a wave pool. SHE MOANS AGAIN. Nick's hitting all the right spots and he knows it.

Nick cups her breast in his hand. The warmth of the water makes her veins visible, because in this moment, she is truly alive. And it's the moment that everything comes to a climax.

DISSOLVE TO:

Harley holds Nick under the bubbles. He leans forward to pour a shot of bourbon from a bottle resting in the soap dish. This gives her another glimpse of his bullet wound.

HARLEY
Whose the guy behind the gun, Nick?

NICK THE SAINT
He's a sinner in a saint's body.

HARLEY
I always loved that guy. Sins n'
all. Every damn one a' them.
(beat)
I'm sorry about who I am, Nick.
Sleepin' around and all. I thought
you were gone for good. The big
sleep and all that jazz. I just
wish I could take it back...

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 back. What are
you really hidin' in that closet a'
yours?

NICK THE SAINT

Skeletons. A whole lot of 'em.

(beat)

That's why I wanted out, Harls. A
new life, a clean slate. 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 stares at his reflection in the water, the eyes of a
cold blooded killer staring right back. He turns to Harley
and yields.

NICK THE SAINT

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

SUPER:

A YEAR BACK

And suddenly, SNOW FLAKES begin falling all around the tub -
yes, right there in the bathroom. Then the lights dim around
Nick & Harley, leaving only A SPOTLIGHT on the two.

AND CAMERA SPINS CLOCKWISE AROUND THE TUB, 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 gettin' out, see.

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
led in my back, just for a splash
of irony.

(MORE)

NICK THE SAINT (V.O.) (cont'd)
 I remember exactly what he said
 right before tuggin' the trigger...

THE MORMON
 I wish I could say the devil made
 me do it, but he's not the one
 signin' my check.
 ("click")
 The only way out of this town, for
 you Nick, is in a wooden overcoat.

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

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

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

RED & BLUE LIGHTS BEGIN FLARING UP THROUGHOUT THE BATHROOM.

NICK THE SAINT (CONT'D)
 Seems the Haitians we were selling
 to ratted our score to the PD. They
 had 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 BATHTUB.

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.

NICK THE SAINT (V.O.)
 I sucked up some leftover strength
 and carried myself across the
 bridge. Found refuge just over the
 city limits.

- TWO NUNS rush from the convent as Nick stumbles and faints
 at its doorsteps.

- Now, Nick is lying in bed while a few nuns care for him.
 One is praying beside him, another nursing his wounds.

NICK THE SAINT (V.O.)
 The sisters nursed me back into
 fair condition. One in particular.
 Her name was...

The sister mending his wound removes the led slug from his back with some rusted tweezers. She rises to soak a towel in a bowl of hot water. And as her face comes into frame, we see...

NICK THE SAINT (V.O.)
Sister Hope Caufield.

- Nick's room at the convent. He hobbles into frame on a wooden crutch, removes a hidden bottle of scotch from behind a framed picture of the convent.

NICK THE SAINT (V.O.)
It took four weeks to get back on
heels. That's when she stopped by
my room, caught me tryin' to drink
my lunch from the bottle.

Nick turns to find Hope sitting on his bed nearby.

NICK THE SAINT
I offered her a sip, but she took
her meals any which way but wet.
Good nun, bad Catholic.
(beat)
Either way, we were playin' hearts
by mornin' mass.

- Nick and Sister Hope lying in bed as a new sun gleams through the blinds. They kiss -- in rapid fire.

- A FEW ELDERLY NUNS hand Nick a red crucifix while he eats. They begin speaking, but we won't make out the words...

NICK THE SAINT (V.O.)
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 only precious thing left
in this damned world was inside it.
(beat)
They asked me to safely escort it to a
waiting party in the east. It was no
longer safe at the monastery - too many
interested parties.

Pan to find Sister Hope listening from behind a cracked door.

NICK THE SAINT (V.O.)
I owed the sisters my life, so I
agreed of course. But the prize was
gone the next day, and Hope was
gone with it.

BACK ON: Nick and Harely in the tub.

NICK THE SAINT
So that's my tale, doll. And it
don't get no taller.

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 A 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 hisses 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
ringin'. And 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 screamin', and
I'll knot your neck tighter than
those tied tubes you let everyone
poke around at.
(to Knockout)
Dry her off. We'll take this piece
of patch to go.
(stops, reconsiders)
On second thought...

He turns, 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 glass & 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. 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. As he reaches 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.

SMASH 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 mmmm? Mm mm mmmmmmm?
 (subtitle:)
"WHAT THE FUCK? WHAT THE FUCK?"

LUCKY
 Yeah. I hear ya.

NICK THE SAINT
 Mmm mmm mm?
 (subtitle:)
"WHERE ARE WE?"

LUCKY
 We're at the Chop Shop.

NICK THE SAINT
 Mmm mmm mmmm? Mmm. Mmm mmm'mm
 mmmm. M mmm'm mmmmmmm mmm mmmm!
 (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 hell, it's better than pumpin' out sweaters or high end tennis shoes.

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 is presently sliding 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 just 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 AND 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 mmmm. Mmmm mmm
mmm mmmm. Mmmm mmm mmm'm mmm mmm...
(subtitle:)
**"WE GOTTA GET OUTTA HERE. THEY GOT
THE CASE. THE GOD SQUAD's GOT IT..."**

...The refrigerated 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 Fiassco Heights. MICK THE MORMON stands in the shadows behind him.

He tosses a few tater tots in his mouth, then squeezes a packet of ketchup right into his mouth. Notice that the ketchup packet MATCHES the one Nick found at McBanisters.

DOUGHBOY
Want some tots?

NICK THE SAINT
I'm full.

DOUGHBOY
Suite 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
I'm gonna watch 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, pure
and uncut. I hear the contents of
this case are beyond priceless. So,
humor me, what's in the case? Tell
me, before I open it.

NICK THE SAINT
One burger no lettuce... side of
curly fries... and a cookie.

SMACK. Mormon wallops Nick again.

DOUGHBOY
Wise ass.

Doughboy stands and cracks Nick across the jaw with his CANE, then he nods to the 52nd officers, they leave the room.

NICK THE SAINT
Who pulled off the bank score?

Doughboy takes another bite of his burrito...

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 PINSTripes (villain #1), WILDE (villain #2), MCBANISTER (villain #3), KNOCKOUT JONES (driver), THE POPE (villain #5).

DOUGHBOY
The God Squad works for me now. See, I couldn't have my own guys gettin' 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' for... she's a real floozy.

SPLICE FLASHBACK: HOPE locks THE CASE away in the safe deposit box at The Fiasco Savings & Loan.

DOUGHBOY
But couldn't have done it without her. She planted herself in that monastery just days before you went limp on their doorstep. The timing was impeccable. She played you like putty, pal.
(beat)
It's gonna be classic 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 -- slides up a chair in front of Nick.

THE MORMON (CONT'D)
Now it's just back to you and me, like old times.
(MORE)

THE MORMON (CONT'D)
 With Doughboy singin' somewhere
 over the rainbow, I'm gonna run
 this show. 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. They offered
 big bucks along with a cut of their
 own turf. And that's real power,
 Nick. Genuine fuckin' power.

Mormon lights up a cigar.

THE MORMON
 See, unlike you, I actually know
 what salvation is.
 (inhale-exhale)
 It's a new recipe your crazy nuns
 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 hide it, keep it all for
 themselves. God bless 'em.

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 again.
 (inhale-exhale)
 That's what you want, right Nicky?
 A new life -- a clean start?
 (now a vicious glare)
 But let's just talk about how my
 boys two-holed that cunt-whore you
 brought into this...

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 into 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 flick 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 THE SAINT
Kid. Hey kid. I need your help...
(kid doesn't budge)
Do you like candy?

JUMP CUT TO:

INT. STAIRWELL - CHOP/SHOP - **NIGHT**

VICTIM #1: A heavy 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.

He struggles up a few more steps, the wheezing continues. He opens his mouth for a second puff of the inhaler, but the raw end of A GLOCK 18 SELECT IS STUFFED IN IT INSTEAD.

Fatty's lips quiver around the barrel.

NICK THE SAINT
Hey Wheezy.

A whining whimper from tubby as Nick takes the trigger in. **BAM!** The inhaler goes airborne.

INT. HALLWAY - CHOP/SHOP - **NIGHT**

VICTIM #2: A BALD GOON hears the gunshots. He runs around the corner, gun leading the charge. Within seconds, a string of wire lassos his neck and lifts him to the ceiling.

Victim kicks wildly, but Nick only tightens his grip -- there's no mercy in these eyes.

Once dead, Nick checks the victim's coat tag for sizes. Looks like a match. He holds the coat firm and shakes the goon out of it. He begins to suit up, as...

CUT TO:

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 talkin' so fast I can't make out the words.

PINSTripes lights a clove and exhales in Lucky's face.

PINSTripes (CONT'D)
You been leakin' trouble from the start, Doyle. Now we've gotta fix your pipes for good.

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 hooks Lucky across the chin.

PINSTripes
I'll assume that's just the frostbite talkin'.

CLICK... Pinstripes pops a SWITCHBLADE against Lucky's cheek. Razor sharp edge pressing into the bone. He goes eye-to-eye.

PINSTripes (CONT'D)
Don't let the stripes fool ya. Last guy that took me faint got cut more crooked than a sunset in boy's town.

Piercing the skin with the tip of his blade.

PINSTripes (CONT'D)
 Let's consider this your
 intervention. Just call it divine
 since you won't be livin' through it.

He glides the point down Lucky's jawline with a malevolent smile.

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, the WHITE STRIPES IN HIS SUIT BEGIN TURNING RED as blood slowly seeps into the fabric. AND...

BAM!! His chest opens in an eruption of blood. Pinstripes falls to his knees and keels over in a lifeless pile. Behind him...

NICK THE SAINT enters in a fume of rising smoke. TWO LOADED SHOTGUNS in hand. He gives COP #1 a point blank introduction.

Cop #1 goes for his piece - but too late - Nick has him caught in a face-off with two smoking barrels. **BAM!**

Nick drops and weaves as both Knockout and Goon #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 projects backwards into a 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... **Boooooooooom!**

Every wood plank in the ground splinters at the force of discharge. Floor blasting in an eruption of debris forcing 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...

Lucky stirs under the burlap sack.

THE SCREAMING CHILDREN bolt for any available exit while COP #2 springs to his feet and begins firing like a guerilla on overtime. The motherfucker is lightning quick. Lucky hits the ground...

BAM. BAM. BAM. BAM. BAM. BAM. BAM. BAM.

NOW, Nick throws one of the tables on end and kicks it toward his enemy - FIRING THROUGH THE WOOD AS IT SLIDES ACROSS THE FLOOR...

THE DINOSAUR MUSIC PLAYS OS.

COP #2 empties his pistols and reaches back for a two-hand refill. Bricks of cocaine are going off around us like fire crackers. Flurries of dope fill the air -- 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.

Cop #2 strips his guns to hollow clips and drops them to the ground. He reaches for his last weapon - a beretta strapped to his ankle. **BAM. BAM. BAM.** He continues where he left off, this dive warehouse being taken to pieces.

Nick squints his eyes as specks of cocaine pelt his face. Bullets making musical mayhem as they land around us.

THE DINOSAUR MUSIC SEEMS TO BE PLAYING LOUDER.

KA-BOOOM!! Chunks of Nick's cover go up in a fray of wood. He spins and fires his shotgun. Smoke sizzles from the open chamber as two fresh shells are dispensed. Now...

Nick dives behind a wooden column, clumps of it projecting into the air. His hands shaking nervously as he reloads...

A STRAY SHOT TRIGGERS SOME ELECTRICAL WIRES FROM A FUSE BOX - AN ENORMOUS SPARK - FIRE SPREADS ALONG THE WALLS.

...**CLICK.** Saint says an abbreviated prayer. He's ready, and he fires to prove it. **BOOM.** GOON #2 is flung against the wall as a table mushrooms in his face. His gun slides out of grasp...

Cop #2 quickly jumps to his feet and charges us. Thinking fast, Nick grabs a sharp instrument (same one the children were using to cut up the drugs) and heaves it across the room. It whirls through the air with a sharp whisp, and...

THUNK. The cleaver-like tool lodges into the goon's forehead. Blood torrents down his face like the floodgates just opened.

And suddenly, **CLICK - CLICK - CLICK - CLICK - CLICK.** An arsenal of weaponry sounds off as The Mormon and a handful of Franchise goons take aim.

THE MORMON
Fitting way for the two of us to
end up. Can I get an Amen?

Nick faces them down, loads two fresh clips - he'll double fist this round. And...

SCENE GOES COMPLETELY SILENT:

Nick steps into the clear and takes a gulp of his own nerve. But 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 Nick's heartbeat. **BA-BUMP. BA-BUMP. BA-BUMP.**

He turns his head just as a BULLET GRAZES HIS CHEEK. Hot ammo pings across frame, bodies going down with elegance around him, as if the whole thing was choreographed by Bob Fosse.

SOUND RETURNS: As Nick finds himself standing, miraculously, with about 5 HOLES IN HIS OVERCOAT.

Now, he aims into the camera -and- puts out one last shot into The Mormon's chest. Mormon goes down with gusto.

NICK THE SAINT
Amen.

<**BOOOM**> Another circuit blows as Nick slaps Lucky conscious. Fire roaring across the walls - this place has ignited.

NICK THE SAINT
C'mon Doyle -- wake up!

Then, **BAM**, Nick takes A SHOT IN THE BACK -and- keels to the ground. A WOUNDED MORMON sits up against the wall across the room - he's bleeding out bad, dying. Nick slumps against the opposite wall... THE CASE LYING DIRECTLY BETWEEN THEM BOTH.

THE MORMON
(re: Nick's back)
I know, that's twice. I'll tell 'em
your last words were "watch my
back". That'll just kill at
cocktail parties.

Nick presses a thumb to his shoulder, applying pressure to the wound.

THE MORMON (CONT'D)
Seriously, I'm choking on the
bittersweet of it all.

AND **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 under his jacket.

Nick smiles until... DING... the cargo elevator stops on their floor. Doors opening slowly to reveal SISTER HOPE CAUFIELD. She sexually saunters into the smoke, passing right between Nick & Mormon. She reaches down and grabs the case.

AN UNSETTLING FEELING COMES OVER NICK when he makes eye contact with her. The heartache shows in his expression.

HOPE

Don't act so surprised, Nick, it doesn't suit you. I'm no virgin when it comes to playin' naughty. You should'a seen that.

NICK THE SAINT

I didn't know you'd sell out for 30 specks of silver. That's all.

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

(to Hope)

This whole thing was a play and I fell right between the lines. You stole the case and stashed it at the bank for your hubby here. Mormon just played dummy until The Catholics agreed to pay big, then ya tried to clean out everyone involved. Even Doughboy and your own outfit.

THE MORMON

Plan B - we just sit back and let you clean 'em all out for us.

Hope walks over to her dying husband.

HOPE

Bravo Nick. Ya solved the puzzle, but ya don't get the prize this time around.

NICK THE SAINT

I've already had the prize, Hope. You've given it up a few times now. Unfortunately, I'd like to return it... too loose.

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 talking about my wife!!

Nick looks at his wound, blood trickling down his sleeve.

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
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...

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.

NICK THE SAINT
Let's just make it a clean break.

More smoke surging in Nick's eyes as he removes the "SPECIAL" that is STILL tucked inside his coat.

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 concrete floor.

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 through the flames.

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.

Her convulsions turn extreme. Blood torrents from her nose, her mouth. Then her eyes roll back into her head. Gone.

More moonlight spreads across scene as Nick places the syringe back in the case. He picks himself up.

He stumbles over to a semi-conscious Lucky, unties him.

NICK THE SAINT
Let's get the hi-fuck outta here.

Nick holds the "salvation" and lifts Lucky onto his shoulder. Together they hobble for the drop-shoot, the ceiling coming down all around us.

THE ROAR OF FIRE - WITH SOME BARELY AUDIBLE DINOSAUR MUSIC.

INT. GARAGE - CHOP/SHOP - **CONTINUOUS**

LUCKY and NICK DROP 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 as the snow plow pulls out of the garage. Both freckled in drugs & blood. The Chop Shop going up in a blaze of fire behind them...

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. FIASCO HEIGHTS - **DAY - ESTABLISHING**

The city is bustling. The 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 structure that resembles Grand Central if built during the Roman Empire.

EXT. CENTRAL STATION - **DAY**

DELI is loading Nick's bag into the taxi cab. Nick, arm in a fresh sling, takes the "salvation" from Lucky.

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...

CLICK. CLICK. CLICK. CLICK. Not again. And Nick/Lucky turn to find a hard boiled crew of Catholic priests holding semi-automatics. Father Pisarro stands at the front of the group.

FATHER PISARRO
I think you got somethin' that belongs to us, fellas.

NICK THE SAINT
(smiles)
In fact, I think we do, father.

Nick hands over the BLACK 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 retreat for sinners. Just in time for 40 days and 40 nights of high tide on the Rawley.

NICK THE SAINT
You're absolutely right, Father.
I'm actually just leaving now. This place isn't my scene anymore.

FATHER PISARRO
Right. Then go with God.

And the holy mob mumbles amongst themselves, then turn to slowly fade into a sea of pedestrians.

LUCKY
Why'd you just hand it over? What's really in that thing?

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 as Deli
 hands Nick the METALLIC CASE. Nick cuffs it to his wrist.

LUCKY
 You switched the cases?

NICK THE SAINT
 Just a little trick I learned in
 pre-school. Let's only hope they
 don't open it till they get home.

Nick winks at Lucky.

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 find 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. I'm leavin' that whole
 business, see. Searchin' for a new
 motto - 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 return the case and 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? Oh, 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.

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
 disappearing in a misty rain.

ON LUCKY

Looks down at Nick's card in his hand.

LUCKY
 Oh, I think my streaks are already
 changin'.

AND, IN A QUICK CUT:

INT. CATION '69 - **NIGHT**

Here we find DOYLE sitting at a POKER TABLE with FIVE other
 players seated along with him.

LUCKY
 And that's how I found salvation.

POKER PLAYER #1
 So, what now Lucky?

On that note, Lucky pushes all his chips into the pot.

LUCKY
 Now? Well now... I go all in.

AND HE GIVES US THAT LUCKY SMILE ONE LAST TIME.

111.

the end...