

KING OF HEISTS

by
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Based on the book
"King of Heists"
By J. North Conway

The Combine
Black Bear Pictures

This is a true story.

During the late 19th century, a group of industrialists known as the "Robber Barons" amassed the largest fortunes in human history. The most powerful among them was Cornelius Vanderbilt, who built the railroads.

In this era, which Mark Twain dubbed "The Gilded Age", the majority of Americans were cast into devastating poverty. Nowhere was the divide between the ultra-rich and the poor as extreme as New York. From top to bottom, it was a thieves' paradise.

FADE IN:

TITLE ON BLACK SCREEN

"Behind every great fortune is a great crime."

- Honore de Balzac

INT. MANHATTAN SAVINGS INSTITUTION - DAY

Morning light streams into a large Romanesque atrium that feels like a cathedral. The camera glides across the floor toward a giant open steel door. We press inside the vault, which is littered with bonds that appear to have been churned out by a violent twister.

Passing over the money, we see a bullet-hole in one of the notes, then drops of blood. Finally, a long smear of dried blood streaking toward the wall.

EXT. THE TOMBS - DAY

SUPER: NEW YORK - 1878

THOMAS "THIRD DEGREE" BYRNES (mid-30s, built like a locomotive) moves toward a podium on the steps of NYPD headquarters, where a throng of REPORTERS awaits him. Though this is the biggest day of his professional life, there is something joyless about the occasion. He hesitates, uncertain where, or how, to begin.

BYRNES

The New York City Police Department has identified the man responsible for the largest heist in U.S. history.

REPORTER

Inspector Byrnes, did he rob more than Jesse James?

BYRNES

For the last ten years, he was responsible for 80% of all bank robberies.

REPORTER

In the city or the state?!

Byrnes pauses, still in shock himself.

BYRNES
In the entire country.

The news sends a shock-wave through the crowd. Over the CLANKING of chains...

CUT TO:

EXT. BRIDGE - DAY

SUPER: OHIO - TEN YEARS EARLIER

A CHAIN GANG twelve deep hauls a back-breaking section of train rail on their shoulders in a forced march across a bridge under construction. The men sweat and grunt in the mid-day sun, straining to keep upright.

At the front of the line is GEORGE LESLIE - silent, but with a deep anger lurking beneath the surface. The youthful glimmer has long since left his eyes, replaced by something dark and urgent and chaotic. He wears a filthy, tattered prison uniform, his skin weathered from hard days in the sun and brutal beatings. Behind him...

WHITE CONVICT
I fought in the Civil War and now
I'm the slave. Someone explain
that to me.

BLACK CONVICT
Carnegie sells the steel,
Rockefeller supplies the oil, and
Vanderbilt runs the trains. Only
ones not making a buck is us.

The men drop the rail and begin hammering it into place as a GUARD smashes a convict to the ground with his rifle.

GUARD
You the son of a bitch that stole
my watch?!

At the front of the chain, George squats by the edge of the bridge. In the distance, a train WHISTLE sounds.

INTERCUT WITH:

The wheels of a train THUNDERING along the tracks.

BACK TO:

The black convict behind George watches curiously as George withdraws the stolen watch, then drops a stone off the side of the bridge...measuring the ticks of the second hand as the pebble cascades to a train track that crosses beneath.

BLACK CONVICT
You checkin' the time?

GEORGE
Not time. Distance.

BLACK CONVICT
Gotta be 30 feet.

GEORGE
38.

GUARD
No talking!

George rises to his feet and brazenly raises the watch for the guard to see.

GEORGE
You lookin' for this?

The guard swings up his rifle at George, who dangles the watch over the edge of the bridge.

INTERCUT WITH:

The train driving forward...

BACK TO:

The guard peers down his sights. He hesitates, knowing he'll lose the watch. The TRAIN WHISTLE blares, closing fast...

The prisoners stop their work, all eyes on the dead man walking as the train rumbles closer on the tracks below.

As George inches his toes to the edge of the bridge, the guards look at him - no way.

BLACK CONVICT
Fall would kill you.

The black convict nervously eyes the chain connecting him to George.

George looks down to see the train roaring past and...JUMPS.

The 10 feet of slack chain snaps taut, slowing George's fall as the black convict is dragged clawing and scratching into the abyss. One by one, the convicts fall like dominos.

George crashes onto the top of the train, dragging a daisy chain of prisoners with him, smashing onto the roof.

George scrambles along the top of the train as the bullets from the guards PING around him. He slips down between two of the cars and dangles upside down, hooking a section of the chain attached to his leg onto the underside of the car.

George gives the chain a tug to make sure it's secure, then jumps off the moving train. As George hits the ground, the chain connecting him to the train slips under the wheels and severs, releasing George as he tumbles on the embankment.

Without a moment of hesitation, George bolts into the dense woods, branches whipping and clawing at him as he sprints deeper and deeper. Running for his life. Never looking back...ROLL TITLES.

CUT TO:

INT. BUTCHER SHOP - DAY

SUPER: NEW YORK

Thomas Byrnes eats a sandwich at the counter in his clean-pressed police uniform. He is young and unbroken. His hat is removed, politely sitting in front of him with the formality of a soldier. Byrnes tunes out the bustle of the city as he savors his chow.

TWO ROUNDSMEN enter. They approach the YOUNG WOMAN who works behind the counter. Byrnes watches with complete situational awareness as they exchange quiet words. He lowers his sandwich and wipes his mouth, anticipating. One of the cops suddenly seizes the woman's arm violently.

COP #1
If your father doesn't have the
money, we can arrange something.

Byrnes approaches. The cop notices Byrnes' badge.

COP #1 (CONT'D)
You're in the wrong precinct, boyo.

The second cop gets in Byrnes' face.

COP #2
Walk away.

Without a word, Byrnes puts the toe of his boot in COP #2's shin, then smashes his face against the counter. COP #1 swings at Byrnes, who dodges and strikes back, sending him tumbling out into the street...

EXT. STREET - CONTINUOUS

Murder in his eyes, Byrnes grips the man's larynx and plunges his head into a muddy puddle, nearly drowning him before pulling the man up, gasping. A stunned crowd gathers.

BYRNES
I live in this precinct, you son of a bitch!

CUT TO:

INT. TAILOR SHOP - DAY

A TAILOR in a small Ohio town measures George as he makes adjustments to a dark suit. George takes note of his wrists, which have deep lacerations from his bindings. He tugs his cuffs down, then looks at himself in the mirror, taking measure of the man staring back at him.

TAILOR
How will you be paying?

George hands him the stolen watch. The tailor inspects it.

GEORGE
I'll need a pair of shoes, too.

EXT. GRAVEYARD - SUNSET

Dressed in his suit, George places a bouquet on the ground before a pair of headstones - John and Carol Leslie. George rises, eyes catching the last sliver of the setting sun.

CUT TO:

INT. WALLING'S OFFICE, THE TOMBS - DAY

Hat propped stiffly under his elbow, Byrnes enters an office, finding a middle-aged man filling out a report.

BYRNES
You Inspector Walling?

INSPECTOR WALLING (50s) takes off his spectacles. Byrnes is uncomfortable as Walling studies him.

BYRNES (CONT'D)
Thomas Byrnes - you sent for me.

WALLING
Are you out of your mind, son? You know what happened to those cops you rearranged? Not a damn thing. There's a way this precinct operates.

Byrnes seethes. Walling has him right where he wants him.

WALLING (CONT'D)
I bet a dumb Irish ape like you grew up in the Five Points. Everyone down there is thieves and murderers. How'd you get out of that God-forsaken sewer? You on the take?

BYRNES
I fought in the war.

WALLING
Drafted, huh? So much for luck of the Irish.

BYRNES
(read 'fuck you')
I volunteered.

WALLING
Where'd you fight?

BYRNES
Bull Run.

The admission of the bloody battle catches Walling off guard.

WALLING
You lost a lot of men.

BYRNES
It was a noble cause.

WALLING
How badly do you want to keep your badge, son?

BYRNES

If you'd fire me over beating a couple crooked leatherheads, it isn't worth the tin it's made from.

Walling has the confirmation he was looking for - eases off.

WALLING

Who's the best police department in the world?

BYRNES

(patronizing)

This one.

WALLING

Bullshit - Scotland Yard. NYPD is just a bunch of bruisers. Scotland Yard...they make cases. It's time to bring New York into the modern age. I'm starting a detective bureau focused on major cases. You heard of "The Shadows"?

BYRNES

No.

WALLING

That's because we don't exist. If we did, those corrupt Tammany bastards in City Hall would shut us down. I don't need a bunch of thick-headed Irish roundsmen. I need smart, uncompromising sonsofbitches who want to make cases. Most of the boys fought in the war like yourself.

Byrnes perks up at the revelation.

WALLING (CONT'D)

Crime in this city is changing. You might even say it's evolving if you're a Darwin man. We need to evolve too. No more uniforms. No more rules. You make cases no matter what it takes. Only connection you'll have to the NYPD is this gold shield.

Walling slides a gold badge toward Byrnes.

WALLING (CONT'D)
Is that something that would
interest you, Mr. Byrnes?

EXT. FARM - NIGHT

*Tall, dry corn stalks occlude our view in every direction.
We're running, whipping past the crumpling leaves...*

*...emerging on a farmhouse, it's roof ablaze. The SHRIEKING
of livestock can be heard from the burning barn.*

SMASH CUT TO:

INT. PASSENGER TRAIN - DAY

George wakes up from the dream to find himself slouched in a seat. He is dressed in his dark suit, armed only with an architecture tube and a Jesse James dimestore novel. He looks out the window at the skyline as the train glides into Manhattan, a gleaming metropolis of ten-story buildings.

EXT. WALL STREET - DAY

George steps off a streetcar and makes his way toward the palatial Grand Opera House. He takes note of a delirious amputee sleeping in a nook in a tattered blue overcoat. The man has a tin cup and a sign that says "Union Army Veteran."

INT. OPERA HOUSE - DAY

George passes an enormous bronze bust of Shakespeare as he makes his way up a large spiral staircase with plush red carpeting and gold banisters.

He moves down the cavernous hallways draped with luxurious red curtains and gilded door frames. Two bare-foot, half-naked, giggling SHOWGIRLS flit past wearing Japanese kabuki masks, drunk on champagne.

INT. JIM FISK'S OFFICE - DAY

George enters the opulent offices of "JUBILEE" JIM FISK, a pudgy, gregarious Wall Street speculator who loves to party as much as he loves making money.

Fisk reads the newspaper in a raised, gold-trimmed throne behind a massive oak desk devoid of any paperwork.

In this innermost circle of garish decor, the room is adorned with expensive Persian rugs, gilded mirrors, and hand-painted urns with frolicking nymphs in pornographic positions.

GEORGE
Offices in an opera house. A bit eccentric, even for you Fisk.

Fisk lowers his paper, lighting up at the sight of his old friend.

FISK
What can I say - I have flare for the dramatic. Christ, George - I haven't seen you since college. Where have you been the last 6 years?!

George blends in effortlessly in this moneyed world, a skill he cultivated in college.

GEORGE
Working in Ohio.

FISK
And now you've come to New York?

GEORGE
It's where the money is.

FISK
I'll say. Did you know that if you adjust for today's dollars, of the 10 richest people in the history of the world, 5 of them are here now?

GEORGE
How about the poorest?

FISK
You can find them all down in the Five Points.

Fisk opens a bottle of champagne.

FISK (CONT'D)
Without wealth there can be no Maecenas.

George tries to mask his distaste for patrician society.

FISK (CONT'D)
Your letter said you want to open an architecture business.
(MORE)

FISK (CONT'D)
Building garish mansions on the
East Side, I imagine.

GEORGE
Banks.
(off Fisk's curiosity)
All that money's got to go
somewhere.

FISK
I invest mine in champagne and
oysters.

George winds his way to his true purpose of the visit.

GEORGE
Can you make some introductions for
me?

Fisk hands a glass of champagne to George.

FISK
Anything for a friend - they're a
scarce resource in this city.

GEORGE
I want to meet Vanderbilt.

FISK
(surprised)
I'm afraid I can't help you with
the Commodore. We had a falling
out over the Erie Railway deal. He
tried to do a hostile takeover, but
I watered down the stock to fend
him off. He can muscle a lot of
people, but not me.

GEORGE
Where can I find him?

FISK
He surveys his kingdom from an
elevated gold train orbiting the
city - thinks he's too good for us.

A voice can be heard approaching the office.

JOSIE (O.S.)
Jimmy, darling. What time are we
going to Del's for dinner?

George looks up to see JOSIE MANSFIELD, the "Cleopatra of 23rd Street." A former showgirl from San Francisco, Josie had infiltrated New York's society, offering her good looks and talents to the highest bidder. Josie is a woman that can be rented, but never owned. Josie wears only a kimono which dangles open, narrowly concealing her breasts. She makes no effort to cover herself.

FISK

George Leslie, meet Josie
Mansfield, the star of the show.

Josie can sense the darkness in George's eyes, and is both drawn to it and threatened by it. He won't be as easily dominated as the others.

JOSIE

Pardon the interruption. I'll leave you two boys to your fun.

As Josie departs.

GEORGE

I thought you were married.

FISK

My wife has a permanent residence in Boston. Besides, Josie is just an amusement.

(changing topic)

Where are you staying?

GEORGE

I was hoping you could help me out with that. My bags were stolen with everything I had. I wired home for money, but until it comes I can't even afford a place to stay.

FISK

Stay at the 5th Avenue Hotel - anything less is uncivilized.

Fisk withdraws some gold troy ounces from his desk.

FISK (CONT'D)

And watch out for pickpockets. The streets are crawling with them.

GEORGE

Gold?

FISK

I've got a deal going with Grant's brother-in-law. Price of gold has gone up 30% since he took office.

GEORGE

Thanks, Jim. I'll pay you back.

FISK

Spend 'em quick, George. In a month they'll be worthless.

(off George's confusion)
Welcome to Wall Street.

EXT. TENEMENTS - DAY

Byrnes and "The Shadows" run down a THIEF through the tenements. Identifiable only by their gold shields and dark overcoats, they look more like undertakers than detectives. Byrnes is a force of nature, demolishing everything in his path...

...smashing through doors...racing across narrow wooden catwalks connecting the buildings as the thief gets tangled in the laundry lines known as the 'flags of the tenements'...

...the thief emerges on the street, looking back as he sprints. From nowhere, Byrnes blindsides him, tackling him through a glass storefront.

The man pulls a knife and lunges, but Byrnes decks him in the jaw - out cold. As the other Shadows arrive, Byrnes dusts the glass off his coat.

INT. HOTEL ROOM, FIFTH AVENUE HOTEL - DAY

The hotel room is littered with disassembled safes.

George wears magnifying goggles at a desk as he dissects a pocket-watch. He uses a pair of tweezers to place one of the gears inside a flat disk with a hole in the center as he creates some type of small mechanized device. He compares his work to an engineering blueprint with a compass and protractor resting on it.

Satisfied, George places a second disk over the one he was working on and clasps them together, revealing the device appears to the naked eye like a Chinese coin. We'll come to know this device as the 'Little Joker'.

George pries the dial off one of his safes and slides the coin's rectangular hole onto the metal shank that was holding the dial. George then replaces the dial, which fits perfectly over the device.

George rises, removing the Little Joker from behind the dial and placing it in his wallet. Leaving to play with fire...

As he steps in the hallway and shuts the door, he wedges a match in the top of the door-frame.

EXT. FULTON STREET - DAY

George stands across the street from the Ocean Bank, tuning out the hectic combustion of Wall Street - BUSINESSMEN, STREET RATS hocking penny papers, etc. - as he studies the pattern of life. He checks the time on a clock as the GUARD puts a closed sign in the bank window.

George turns to see UNIFORMED COPS exit the 15th Precinct beside him, directly across from the bank. He is suddenly approached by a beautiful 10-year-old girl, dressed in rags and covered with soot. The girl, BABE, looks up at George with sad blue eyes.

BABE

Mister, you wanna buy an apple?

George looks down to see the girl holding a rotten apple.

BABE (CONT'D)

Only two pennies.

George hands her a dollar from his wallet.

GEORGE

You can keep the apple.

Babe clutches the dollar bill like a precious doll. As the girl departs gleefully...

...George looks up, spotting Vanderbilt's red and gold train car circling the elevated tracks.

He suddenly feels a tugging at his jacket and looks down to see a skinny, filthy, 15-year-old boy named JOHNNY IRVING holding out the dollar bill indignantly. Babe stands guiltily at his side.

JOHNNY

Hey, did you give this to my sister? Do we look like beggars to you?!

(MORE)

JOHNNY (CONT'D)
Our parents didn't raise us to take
charity. So you can take your
dollar and stick it where the sun
don't shine.

George is taken aback by the young man's speech as Johnny
tosses the bill at him and departs with Babe.

George picks up the bill, but when he goes to return it to
his wallet, his wallet is gone. George scans the crowd
curiously, but the little pickpockets have disappeared. He
turns to leave, surprisingly unperturbed by the robbery.

INT. JIM FISK'S OFFICE - DAY

George enters Fisk's office, where Fisk commands his
UNDERLINGS.

FISK
Wait until gold hits twenty, then
dump it.

Fisk sees George, sensing George's urgency.

FISK (CONT'D)
(to underlings)
Excuse us, please.

GEORGE
You got connections in the police?

FISK
What's wrong?

GEORGE
I need some discrete cops.

FISK
You in trouble?

GEORGE
My wallet was pickpocketed by a
young girl on Fulton Street.

FISK
Money comes and goes, George. It's
best not to call on those
relationships for matters of this
microtude.

GEORGE

I don't care about the money.
There was something in it I need
back, and I can't go through
official channels.

Fisk loves a good mystery...

FISK

A love letter?

GEORGE

A Chinese coin.

Fisk can tell there is more, but George doesn't want to talk.

FISK

I'll see what I can do. Go back to
the hotel and have a drink. I'll
send someone.

INT. HOTEL ROOM, FIFTH AVENUE HOTEL - EVENING

George returns to his room, finding the match he wedged in
the door now resting on the floor. Nerves on edge - the game
beginning...

George stacks the disassembled safes in his closet. He
paces, searching for any other evidence. Suddenly, a KNOCK
at the door. George spots his diagram on the desk and stuffs
it in the closet as well before going to the door. Opening
it to find...

...no one there. On the floor is his wallet. George opens
it. Empty, except for a formal invitation that reads: "Ms.
Marm Mandelbaum cordially invites you to an evening of
bacchanalia at 79 Clinton Street. Black tie attire."

INT. BASEMENT, THE TOMBS - DAY

The thief Byrnes tackled is bound to a chair in the
windowless stone room as he is interrogated by an aggressive
young cop - JOHN "CLUBBER" WILLIAMS.

CLUBBER

We know you're guilty, Joe! We
found the rock sewn into your coat!

Clubber grabs the thief's face, frustrated.

CLUBBER (CONT'D)
You think this is good times. I'm
just the opening act.

The large iron door swings open and the silhouette of a hulking figure enters...Thomas Byrnes.

BYRNES
(to Clubber)
I'll take it from here.

Clubber wipes his sweaty brow, exhausted, as he departs. Byrnes lowers himself to eye level with the convict.

BYRNES (CONT'D)
You know I grew up at an orphanage
in the Five Points like you, and if
I stole a 3-carat diamond, I
wouldn't know what in the hell to
do with it. Can't be more than a
couple fences in the city who could
move that kind of swag.

Byrnes gets right in the man's ear, whispering.

BYRNES (CONT'D)
I don't care about you, Joe. Just
tell me who you work for.

The thief maintains his silence. Byrnes changes tack.

BYRNES (CONT'D)
You know there's a thousand ways to
make a man talk.

Byrnes withdraws a small Japanese chopstick from his pocket.

BYRNES (CONT'D)
Ever seen one of these before?
(off the thief's silence)
I heard in ancient Japan, if they
wanted a man to talk, they'd take
one of these and stick it in his
dick, then light it on fire and let
it burn down until they got a
confession. In all history, no man
ever reached the end of the stick.
(holding it eye-level)
So I'll ask you politely for the
last time - who do you work for?

THIEF
Marm.

Byrnes looks back to Clubber, who hasn't heard the name.

BYRNES
Who's Marm?

EXT. CLINTON STREET - NIGHT

Byrnes and Clubber stand in an alley, cloaked in shadows as they surveil "Mandelbaum's Dry Goods and Haberdashery", which is situated on a dark commercial block on the Lower East Side. The store appears to be shuttered for the night, save for the parade of wealthy fashionistas in lounge suits and fur coats that look like they just stepped off 5th Avenue.

CLUBBER
Half the people going in there are known crooks.

BYRNES
The other half are the people they're robbing. Bankers, politicians...

CLUBBER
Jesus - that's the mayor. We shouldn't be here.

Clubber smokes his pipe nervously, the glowing cherry floating in the darkness. Byrnes' binoculars find George walking along the sidewalk in black tie.

George searches for the right address as he anxiously scans the shadows.

BYRNES
Who's this one?

CLUBBER
Never seen him. Probably just some Wall Street bloke.

Byrnes is intrigued - tracking George as he nears the door.

BYRNES
Not him, rich people are oblivious.

CLUBBER
Then a common thief.

BYRNES
Thieves keep their eyes down.
Don't want to be noticed. This one has his eyes up, like a predator.

George pauses and faces the display window of the dark store.

CLUBBER
What's he looking at?

Byrnes realizes George is doing counter-surveillance...

BYRNES
Us.

ANGLE ON: George watching the reflection of the street in the window, seeing the cherry of Clubber's pipe in the dark.

Byrnes barks at Clubber.

BYRNES (CONT'D)
Put that out.

As George reaches the door, he turns, staring into the inky shadows across the street, looking right at Byrnes but unable to see him.

AN ENORMOUS MAN with a shock of fiery red hair suddenly opens the door..."RED" LEARY, the ugliest, meanest Irishman to ever crawl out of the sewers of the Five Points.

GEORGE
I received this invit--

Before George can withdraw the letter, Red cuts him off.

RED
This way.

INT. MANDELBAUM STORE - CONTINUOUS

Red guides George through the dark store by lantern as the floorboards creak beneath their feet. George casts a furtive glance over his shoulder, sensing he is being led to his execution. They head up a staircase. George balls his fists, preparing to fight for his life if necessary.

RED
Watch your step.

The muted sounds of talking can be heard as they approach a door. Red solemnly opens the door to...

...an explosion of revelry. The greatest party on earth in its day. A mixed-race band hammers out MUSIC. White-gloved waiters pass caviar and oysters and champagne. And beautiful women everywhere.

George saddles up to the bar, where JERRY THOMAS, the Jupiter Olympus of bartending, makes his famous 'blue blazer', tossing a flaming arc of whiskey from one shaker to the next.

George looks two seats down the bar to see Fisk's mistress, Josie Mansfield, tip a flaming sugar cube off a silver spoon into a green glass of absinthe, igniting it.

JOSIE
La fée verte - the green fairy.

GEORGE
Heard that stuff makes you crazy.

JOSIE
Mad as a hatter. We're all mad
here, George.

JERRY THOMAS
What can I make you?

GEORGE
Bourbon - neat.

George knocks back the drink to numb his anxiety. Wondering what in the hell kind of bizarre world he has ventured into.

JOSIE
You should come see my show at the
opera house. It's called the
Twelve Temptations.

GEORGE
I prefer the blood and thunder
thrillers.

Josie isn't accustomed to rejection - is intrigued by him.

JOSIE
You're a dull boy.

GEORGE
I'm here on business...suspect you
are too.

Josie would prefer to keep it about him...

JOSIE
Fisk says you're the smartest man
he ever met. Says if it weren't
for you he couldn't have cheated
his way through college.

George scans the mirror behind the bar, casing the room. He didn't come here to flirt.

GEORGE

Yeah, well, knowledge is knowing where to look.

JOSIE

Bet he doesn't know you were in prison.

(off George's surprise)

Those scars on your wrists - didn't get those from gold bracelets.

Josie studies George, sizing him up.

JOSIE (CONT'D)

I know your type.

GEORGE

What type is that?

JOSIE

My type.

GEORGE

You're Fisk's girl.

JOSIE

I'm no one's girl. He takes what he wants and I do the same.

GEORGE

So you are here on business. Who's your target?

JOSIE

End of the bar.

George spots a DAPPER MAN in a silk stovepipe hat.

GEORGE

Big hat?

JOSIE

Name's Ned Stokes. You don't tell Fisk my secret and I won't tell him yours.

Josie looks over George's shoulder, sensing trouble. She rises to leave, playing coy.

JOSIE (CONT'D)
 Oh my ears and whiskers - how late
 it's getting.

As Josie departs, a hand SLAPS down on the bar. The hand pulls away, revealing the Little Joker. George looks up to see MARM MANDELBAUM (50s, maternal), the Queen of the Underworld.

MARM
 Mr. Leslie, I'm so glad you received my invitation.

GEORGE
 Ms. Mandelbaum, the belle of the ball.

George holds her eyes as he ceremoniously lifts her gloved hand, kissing it.

INT. MARM'S OFFICE - MOMENTS LATER

Marm leads George into her office, which is decked out in enough stolen finery to rival Versailles.

MARM
 Watch out for that girl, Josie.
 She's a waste of ammunition.

Marm examines the Little Joker in her hand.

MARM (CONT'D)
 I've seen Chinese coins before, but never one like this.
 (inspects the characters on both sides)
 'Life' and 'death' - how poetic.

George remains silent, playing it close to the vest.

MARM (CONT'D)
 Do you believe in fate, Mr. Leslie?

GEORGE
 I believe in design and calculation.

MARM
 We both know what this is - the Little Joker - the Holy Grail of bank robbing. Records the turns of a bank dial.
 (MORE)

MARM (CONT'D)
In all of history dating back to
Ali Baba himself, no one's been
able to figure out how to make one.
A lot of men have gone to jail
trying.

GEORGE
I met a few of 'em.

MARM
(feeling George out)
What are the odds that a man so
brilliant could make such an
obvious error losing this?

GEORGE
A Chinese coin is worthless to a
pickpocket unless it goes through a
fence. And a good fence would know
that coin isn't real.

MARM
So you were looking for me?

GEORGE
I need someone who knows how to
move scores. Someone knowledgeable
enough to appreciate that device.

A young white-gloved waiter brings a tray of oysters on ice.

MARM
God works in mysterious ways.

Marm slurps an oyster off the half-shell as George recognizes
the waiter as Johnny, the teenage pickpocket who stole his
wallet.

GEORGE
God's not the only one.

Marm opens a closet, revealing an enormous safe. She tugs
off the dial, placing the Little Joker over the rod. She
then replaces the dial.

MARM
Must've taken months to make.

GEORGE
Three weeks - imported the parts
from Geneva.

With her back to George, Marm carefully enters the
combination.

As Marm turns the dial, we ZOOM INSIDE THE LOCK, where the gears inside the Little Joker click, registering each turn.

MARM

Let's see if you're as smart as I think you are.

George removes the Little Joker, examining it's intricate gears, then twists the dial, entering the combo. KACHUNK. The safe opens, revealing bricks of cash piled high.

MARM (CONT'D)

How do you read it?

GEORGE

It uses a code only I know.

MARM

I'll give you ten thousand for it.

GEORGE

It's worth ten times that.

MARM

Fine - a hundred thousand.

GEORGE

I don't want your money.

MARM

I take it you don't plan on using that thing for chastity belts.

Who's your target?

GEORGE

Vanderbilt and anyone else who has it coming.

MARM

So you fancy yourself a modern day Robin Hood?

GEORGE

No, I plan to keep it all for myself.

MARM

Thank God. The last thing I need is a Marxist bank robber. That bank you're planning won't be easy.

GEORGE

You don't know which bank I'm hitting.

MARM

You were pickpocketed at the corner of Greenwich and Fulton. Means you're planning to hit the Ocean Bank. Two crews have already tried and failed.

GEORGE

I read the reports. They were sloppy.

Marm lets George get away with the insult - agrees with him.

MARM

You know where Gotham gets its name? It was a medieval town that was legendary for its stupidity. This town is ripe for the taking, but you gotta know how to seize the opportunity. When you start talking banks, you'll need a crew to help you get in. And you'll need a way to move the score once you're out. For a 50% cut, I can provide all that.

George considers.

MARM (CONT'D)

You knock off the banks, I'll take care of everything else.

GEORGE

What about the cops?

MARM

There's an old Russian saying - he who has money has no fear of the law.

INT. BARE-KNUCKLE FIGHT - NIGHT

Marm confers with George as two desperate fighters annihilate each other in the ring. The steady DIN of cheering is sporadically interrupted by calls for blood.

MARM

If you're successful, this'll be the biggest score this city's ever seen.

GEORGE

When do I meet the crew?

MARM

You'll be taking over Shang Draper's gang. They're a ruthless bunch of sonsofbitches, but they're good at what they do. They'll need someone with your brains to pull this off, though.

GEORGE

One rule - no one gets killed.

MARM

If you do your job right, no one will.

GEORGE

Who's Shang?

MARM

Pimp, thief, take your pick. Runs a brothel in the Bowery. Generally undesirable fellow but he's light on scruples, which can be a plus in this business.

INSERT: A john humps away at a prostitute who feigns pleasure. Unbeknownst to the john, a panel in the wall opens and SHANG DRAPER emerges, emptying the man's wallet from his discarded pants. Shang is a thin, greasy, hateful man who exerts power over the weak to compensate for low self-esteem.

MARM (CONT'D)

Red Leary. Muscle. Killed sixteen men that I'm aware of, most of whom had it coming.

INSERT: Red Leary, a leathery, red-haired throat-slitter dumps a large sack with a body off a rowboat. The same man who led George into Marm's party.

MARM (CONT'D)

Charlie Bullard. Best damn piano player in New York city. Can play anything, including a safe's dial.

INSERT: "PIANO" CHARLIE BULLARD hammers out a tune at Marm's party, his fingers dancing with preternatural speed.

MARM (CONT'D)

Abe Coakley and Jimmy Hope. Most knowledgeable engineers in the business.

INSERT: ABE COAKLEY and JIMMY HOPE tirelessly toil away at a safe, methodically hammering wedges to get it open.

MARM (CONT'D)
And Johnny Irving, whom you've met.

INSERT: The young pickpocket JOHNNY IRVING serves George at Marm's party - the same one who took his wallet with Babe.

GEORGE
I'm gonna need money to gain access
to the bank and a place to train
the crew.

MARM
Whatever you need, handsome.

Marm leans into George, serious.

MARM (CONT'D)
Remember, the artist is nothing
without the gift, but the gift is
nothing without the work.

INT. WAREHOUSE - DAY

The Shang Draper gang is gathered around a large safe that is covered in chunks of mortar and brick. Abe Coakley and Jimmy Hope drill the lock as Marm and George watch.

MARM
They took it from a bank last week,
but still can't get it open.

George examines the safe, spinning it on its wheeled dolly.

GEORGE
This is a Yale Imperial - can't be
drilled.

MARM
Gentlemen, meet George Leslie.

Shang is exasperated.

SHANG
I say we nitro the damn thing.

GEORGE
Nitro is fool's gold. You'd need
enough bang to blow up everything
inside as well as yourself.

SHANG

You got any better ideas, smartass?

GEORGE

Yeah, toss it out the window.

Shang turns his back on George, angry.

SHANG

Get this niminy piminy jackass out
of here --

GEORGE

(cutting him off)

The Imperials use a spring locking
mechanism. If you drop the safe
hinge-side down, you'll create
enough kinetic energy to compress
the springs.

George positions himself against the safe like a rugby player
in the scrum, then runs, shoving the safe across the room on
the dolly and toppling it out the second-story.

The crew gathers at the window to see the safe lying on its
side on the cobblestone below, spilling out cash.

MARM

From now on, George calls the
shots.

SHANG

This is my crew.

MARM

No, this is *my* crew. Don't any of
you forget who you work for.

INT. UPSCALE OFFICE BUILDING - DAY

George stencils a sign on a foggy window to an indoor office.
The sign reads, "GEORGE L. LESLIE, ARCHITECT". George takes
a step back, admiring his new life.

The pick-pocket Johnny Irving appears next to him, like the
terrier to George's pitbull.

JOHNNY

Almost look like a respectable
society man.

George pushes in, circling an architecture desk where he has
a diagram in process.

GEORGE

Johnny, I got a special job for you
on this one.

JOHNNY

What kind of job?

GEORGE

Honest work.

JOHNNY

Why me?

GEORGE

I need someone I can trust.

George puts on his coat to leave.

GEORGE (CONT'D)

Now give me my wallet back.

Johnny smiles, pulling George's wallet from his pocket and
returning it, having deftly robbed him a second time.

INT. OCEAN BANK - DAY

George sits across from a bookish bank manager - ED SCHELL.
George drops a large suitcase on the desk.

ED SCHELL

May I ask what kind of work you're
in?

GEORGE

Architecture.

Ed looks in the case - full of money.

ED SCHELL

And a talented one from the looks
of it.

GEORGE

I plan on making a bunch more
deposits that size.

ED SCHELL

They say everyone comes to New York
for a different reason...

(smiling)

But we're all here to make money.

GEORGE

Actually moved here to look after my nephew. He's had trouble getting back on track since his mother died. His boss gave away his job as a janitor.

ACROSS THE ROOM: Johnny Irving plays the role of bored teenager as he steps across the flagstones on the floor of the lobby, mumbling under his breath as he counts his steps.

JOHNNY

Thirty-one, thirty-two...

Johnny terminates at the vault, admiring the large door.

ED SCHELL

What a shame. Shall we get started with the deposit?

GEORGE

I got few more banks to interview before I make a decision.

George rises to leave. Ed panics, trying not to lose him.

ED SCHELL

What if I could get your nephew a job here?

INT. GEORGE LESLIE'S ARCHITECTURE OFFICE - DAY

George draws a diagram as Johnny huddles over him.

JOHNNY

I counted 32 stones.

GEORGE

At 24 inches each...

Johnny examines the diagram.

JOHNNY

You did all this from memory?!
That's impossible.

GEORGE

It's something I was born with.
When I close my eyes, I remember everything like the picture is painted on my eyelids.

INT. WAREHOUSE - DAY

George rolls out a diagram in front of his crew in a warehouse on the docks.

GEORGE

...the room is 68 feet by 80 feet. Two doors off the main lobby. Door on the left is the bank president's office - one on the right's the vault. The walls of the vault are solid steel lined with stone.

JIMMY

If digging into the vault isn't an option, how will we get in?

INTERCUT WITH:

INT. OCEAN BANK - DAY

Johnny Irving works sweeping up. He approaches the vault and pulls the Little Joker from his pocket, surreptitiously using a small chisel to jimmy off the dial.

INT. WAREHOUSE - DAY

George's crew builds a reconstruction of the bank as George talks with Charlie Bullard beside a tall safe.

GEORGE

The Little Joker will tell us how many turns in each direction, but it doesn't tell us where to start, so we'll need to be prepared to hit up to fifty combos. Let's see how quick those fingers dance.

Charlie's fingers whir as he rifles through combinations. Charlie finishes, clenching his trembling fingers in a fist.

GEORGE (CONT'D)

(checking stopwatch)

3 minutes. Keep at it.

George sees the young street urchin Babe watching from her perch atop a crate. He pulls Johnny aside.

GEORGE (CONT'D)

Don't you have parents?

JOHNNY
(uncomfortable)
Father, but he drinks too much.

George notices bruises on Babe's arms - doesn't have the heart to send her home.

GEORGE
Just keep an eye on her.

INT. WAREHOUSE - DAY

As the crew works, George hands Babe a present. Babe eagerly unwraps a copy of Lewis Carroll's *Alice's Adventures In Wonderland*. Babe flips backward through the illustrations.

BABE
A book about a rabbit!

George smiles sadly, realizing she can't read. He is approached by Jimmy Hope.

JIMMY
I found an office for rent across from the bank.

George walks with Jimmy, surveying the mock-up of the bank.

GEORGE
Good - rent it under the name Jack Howard.

JIMMY
Who's that?

INT. OCEAN BANK - DAY

George hands Ed a bag of money. As Ed enters the combination in the dial to put the money in the vault, we PUSH INSIDE the lock, where the Little Joker records the turns.

The door opens...

MATCH CUT TO:

INT. WAREHOUSE - NIGHT

George's replica of the vault in the warehouse, spatially perfect, though built from a hodge-podge of stolen furniture.

GEORGE
Welcome to the Ocean Bank vault.

Behind him the crew looks on skeptically.

SHANG
If Johnny's working the night of
the robbery, they'll know he was in
on it.

GEORGE
That's why he won't be working.

RED
Then how are we getting into the
lobby?

GEORGE
Getting in isn't the problem.
Problem is the windows. The bank
is located across from the police
station.

The crew guffaws at the proposition.

SHANG
You want to rob a bank while a
dozen cops are looking right in the
window?!

JIMMY
The second they see light, we're
cooked.

George is two steps ahead, as always.

GEORGE
There won't be any light.

ABE
What's the plan? Paint the windows
black?

GEORGE
We rob it in the dark.

The crew trades a look - *he can't be serious.*

CUT TO:

INT. WAREHOUSE - NIGHT

Darkness...

GEORGE (O.S.)
One.

George lifts the shutter on a "dark lantern" (metal lamp with a circular opening) revealing the crew in various positions around the vault as they dial in their split second timing.

GEORGE (CONT'D)
Good.

George shutters the lantern. Blackness...

GEORGE (CONT'D)
Two.

He lifts up the shutter, revealing the men in new positions.

GEORGE (CONT'D)
Shang, you're a foot off. You're
responsible for the jewelry in that
lock-box.
(beat)
Start over.

SHANG
For Christ's sake, we been at this
for hours!

Shang points at one of the walls.

SHANG (CONT'D)
Look at this - we're leaving an
entire wall of boxes untouched!

George covers the lantern. Blackness. When he appears again he is standing before the lock boxes.

GEORGE
That's because those are registered
securities. Not only are they
worthless to us, but they can also
be traced back to the heist.

George extinguishes the light, appearing behind Shang.

GEORGE (CONT'D)
You rob these and you're signing
your death warrant.

Shang spins, but before he can find George, all is dark.

GEORGE (V.O.) (CONT'D)
We only want things we can move -
cash and jewelry.

George appears, standing before the crew.

GEORGE (CONT'D)

We don't hit the bank until every
one of you has the vault memorized.
Run it again.

George extinguishes the lantern, casting the crew into
darkness.

INT. OCEAN BANK - DAY

SUPER: OCEAN NATIONAL BANK - JUNE 2, 1869

FADE UP on the ocean bank vault, a perfect match for the
warehouse, only the vault has been turned inside out. Byrnes
scans the crime scene, taking in the magnitude of the heist.

CLUBBER

They made off with eight hundred
thousand in cash and jewelry. Left
another five hundred thousand in
securities untouched.

BYRNES

They knew exactly what they came
for - didn't take anything that
could be traced. Any luck with the
witnesses?

CLUBBER

A dozen people passed by the bank
last night. No one saw or heard a
thing - including the security
guard who was standing at the front
door the entire time.

Byrnes struggles to grasp the scope of what George's crew
pulled off. Walling approaches.

WALLING

How did they get in?

Byrnes leads Walling to a hole in the ground outside the
vault, which is flanked by two halves of a giant flagstone.

BYRNES

They dug 120 feet, then used a
jackscrew to split this stone.

Walling examines the rabbit-hole leading into the center of
the earth.

WALLING

Where's it go?

BYRNES

Leads to an office across the street. Registered to one Jack Howard. We're looking into it.

WALLING

Looks like we've got a new breed of criminal operating in our city. I want you to run this case.

BYRNES

Yes, sir.

Walling taps his temple, coaching his young protege.

WALLING

Don't forget your greatest weapon.

INT. MANDELBAUM STORE - DAY

Marm's crew uses a scale to divide up the mountains of cash. Marm approaches George with a wooden box.

GEORGE

What's this?

George opens the box to find a shiny revolver.

MARM

You've got a target on you now, kid. People on both sides of the law will be gunnin' for you.

EXT. CATHOLIC BOARDING SCHOOL - DAY

George speaks with a NUN. Babe stands at his side wearing a new dress and holding a suitcase. Johnny is there as well.

GEORGE

How much is an education here?

NUN

\$100 per year.

George hands the nun a leather duffel full of money.

GEORGE

This should get her through graduation. Consider the rest a donation.

The nun looks in the bag, dumbfounded.

NUN

God bless you, sir.

Through the doorway, Babe can see all the children in their uniforms playing. She hides behind George.

BABE

I don't want to go in there.

Johnny steps in - the only one Babe trusts.

JOHNNY

You'll be safe here, Babe.

George casts a glance at Johnny as the nun leads Babe away.

INT. WALLING'S OFFICE, THE TOMBS - DAY

Byrnes debriefs Walling in his office.

BYRNES

The lock showed no sign of tampering. No gunpowder, no drilling. Talked to a dozen locksmiths. No one's ever seen anything like it.

WALLING

Probably an inside job - someone who knew the combo.

BYRNES

Only one man knew the combo and his alibi is solid.

WALLING

So we got nothin'?

BYRNES

I noticed one thing in the bank records. Ten people made deposits in the week leading up to the heist.

WALLING

Follow up on them.

BYRNES
Already did.

INSERT SURVEILLANCE MONTAGE:

The Shadows tail various men on the list, crossing them off.

BYRNES (V.O.) (CONT'D)
All checked out except one.

One of the Shadows grinds a piece of chalk in his hands. As he walks past a man on a crowded street, he touches the man's back, leaving a small mark. The Shadow continues on his way, where he passes Byrnes, whispering...

SHADOW
White chalk.

Byrnes pushes through the crowd, finding the dark suit with the white smudge up ahead. As the man approaches an office building, he looks back over his shoulder, revealing...George Leslie. Byrnes double-takes at the familiar face, then circles the name on his list.

BACK TO:

BYRNES
Guy's an architect.

WALLING
You think he's connected?

BYRNES
(confident)
I also saw him entering one of
Marm's parties a month ago.

The mention of Marm Mandelbaum carries weight for Walling.

WALLING
Keep him under surveillance.

INT. GEORGE LESLIE'S ARCHITECTURE OFFICE - DAY

George enters his architecture office and hangs up his coat. He pauses, noticing the small white chalk smudge on the fabric. George runs his fingers over it - suspicious.

INT. MANDELBAUM STORE - DAY

Red wheels a crate through Marm's store as George enters.

RED

(to Marm)

Just got this shipment from a crew
in England. Where do you want it?

MARM

Take it in back.

Marm hands George a folder.

MARM (CONT'D)

New target.

GEORGE

Vanderbilt's money?

MARM

Some of it...Johnny can't put the
Joker in this time - the cops will
make the connection.

GEORGE

(unfazed)

Then we'll break in twice the same
week - once to install the Joker
and once to rob it.

MARM

Impossible.

GEORGE

Wanna bet your half?

Marm smiles, likes his attitude.

MARM

Son, you have some iron balls.

INT. BANK - DAY

George walks through a busy bank, taking inventory of the
room - especially the various locks. His mind's eye overlays
architectural schematics and notes on everything he sees.

The camera PULLS UP high above George, offering a top-down
view. DISSOLVE TO...

INT. GEORGE LESLIE'S ARCHITECTURE OFFICE - DAY

A diagram perfectly matching the bank as George sketches...

MAN (O.S.)

Excuse me.

(re: sign)

Says Mr. Leslie's an architect?

George looks up to see a YOUNG MAN and his PREGNANT WIFE standing in the doorway.

MAN (CONT'D)

We're looking for someone to build us a house.

George hesitates, surprised to have a real client.

GEORGE

I'm George Leslie. Please, have a seat.

George slides into the role of architect effortlessly.

GEORGE (CONT'D)

(re: pregnant wife)

Looks like you're gonna need a couple bedrooms.

WIFE

We were thinking something simple like you get in Cape Cod. I grew up there.

MAN

(embarrassed)

We don't have much money.

GEORGE

That won't be a problem.

EXT. ROOFTOP - NIGHT

Byrnes watches from an adjacent rooftop as George Leslie burns the midnight oil drawing an architectural diagram as he sips a glass of whiskey. Clubber peers through a telescope.

BYRNES

Where'd you fight in the war, Clubber?

CLUBBER

I didn't - I was in college. My old man paid 300 bucks to buy me an exemption. So I quit school and became a cop to piss him off.

Clubber lowers his telescope, taking a seat behind the low wall on the roof.

CLUBBER (CONT'D)
We're barking up the wrong tree.

Clubber lights his pipe. Byrnes takes note, annoyed, but doesn't say anything this time.

BYRNES
He's connected. We just need to watch and wait.

The light goes out in George's office. Byrnes sees George exiting the building - snaps to action.

BYRNES (CONT'D)
He's moving.

EXT. OPERA HOUSE - NIGHT

Byrnes and Clubber tail George as he enters the opera house, where the marquee advertises *The Twelve Temptations*.

CLUBBER
Let's flash our badges and go in.

Byrnes take note of the wealthy theater patrons.

BYRNES
Look at those people. We'll stick out like balls on a bulldog in there.

Clubber pulls his collar up, shivering. Byrnes can sense his frustration.

BYRNES (CONT'D)
Go home and get some rest.

INT. OPERA HOUSE - NIGHT

George watches the show in a box with Fisk. Fisk holds his theater glasses in one hand and pretends he's conducting the orchestra with the other.

As Josie sings a number on stage, George surreptitiously checks his pocket-watch, then leans in to Fisk.

GEORGE
You'll have to excuse me - I'm not feeling well.

George rises to leave...

INT. RESTROOM - MOMENTS LATER

George washes his hands beside another theater patron. As the man departs, George opens the window and slips out.

EXT. STREET - MOMENTS LATER

George drops out the window onto the street. He checks his surroundings, then his watch, as he rushes away.

EXT. ALLEY - CONTINUOUS

George arrives at an alley beside a bank, where his crew is already waiting. Red Leary places a chisel in the door and hammers it, breaking the lock. As the crew silently presses inside, Abe Coakley is already pulling out a duplicate lock and installing it...the operation tuned like a Swiss watch.

INT. BANK - CONTINUOUS

The crew drills the lock on the outer vault door, catching the metal splinters on a cloth. As they bust through, Shang wraps up the cloth with the evidence. Charlie Bullard reaches in the hole with a knitting needle, picking the lock and opening the vault door. As the crew presses inside the vault, Jimmy Hope begins filling the hole with black putty.

George races to the giant safe inside, where Johnny is already using a crowbar to pop the dial. George slides the Little Joker into place, then replaces the dial.

EXT. ALLEY - MOMENTS LATER

The crew floods out as Abe finishes repairing the lock...

GEORGE
Joker's in place. We come back
Sunday.

...sealing the door behind them like they were never there.

INT. OPERA HOUSE - LATER

George returns to his seat in Fisk's booth, where Fisk stands as he obviously conducts the orchestra.

FISK

You're just in time - this next
number's rollicking good fun.

INT. BYRNES APARTMENT - DAY

Byrnes splashes water on his face, taking note of the dark circles under his eyes in the mirror. His wife, OPHELIA, enters behind him. She is eight months pregnant and beginning to wonder if this is life.

OPHELIA

It's six in the morning.

BYRNES

I need to shave and go back to
work.

OPHELIA

How was your night?

Byrnes reaches for his razor, overwhelmed by exhaustion.

BYRNES

Fine.

Ophelia waits for more, then mimics the conversation she'd like to have had.

OPHELIA

'Fine sweetheart, how was yours?'

Byrnes catches her eye in the mirror.

OPHELIA (CONT'D)

If you don't care, you could at
least pretend.

BYRNES

I do care - I'm just exhausted.

OPHELIA

I saw Pete Bingham's wife
yesterday. They just moved into a
big place on 14th. Didn't know you
could live there on a cop's salary.

BYRNES

You can't.

(beat)

Is that what's upsetting you -
money?

OPHELIA

I don't care that we're broke. I
don't care that you never take me
out for a nice dinner or that we
live in a small apartment. But I
need you.

BYRNES

I'm doing the best I can.

Ophelia hands Byrnes a wrapped present.

OPHELIA

Happy birthday.

BYRNES

What is it?

OPHELIA

For your office.

Byrnes opens the present, finding a framed studio photograph of Ophelia and his daughters.

OPHELIA (CONT'D)

If you can't be with us, at least
we can be with you.

Ophelia places a loving hand on his back.

INT. JIM FISK'S OFFICE - DAY

SUPER: BLACK FRIDAY - SEPTEMBER 24, 1869

George reads the paper as he moves down Fisk's hallway. The headline reads "JACK HOWARD GANG STRIKES AGAIN. LARGEST CASH HAUL IN NATION'S HISTORY."

Fisk stands on his desk, belligerently intoxicated by his own success. He is flanked by showgirls and business associates in tuxedos as he uses a saber to slash open a bottle of champagne, which he pours on the girls below. He sees George in the doorway.

FISK

Mob's rioting in the street!
Apparently they weren't too keen on
gold losing 50% of it's value.

George takes note of the ornate military uniform Fisk is wearing.

GEORGE

Why are you dressed like a Mexican
general?

FISK

If Vanderbilt's the Commodore, then
I'm the god-damn Admiral! \$11
million in one day. The pharaohs
can kiss my ass!

George shakes his head, amused, as a cocktail finds its way
into his hand.

EXT. FIFTH AVENUE HOTEL - NIGHT

The party has moved to the Fifth Avenue Hotel, where George
and Fisk split a bottle of whiskey at the bar with their ties
undone. The room is peppered with Fisk's frayed drunken
entourage.

GEORGE

Where's all that money come from?

Fisk blows a cloud of cigar smoke, cavalier.

FISK

It's all one big parlor game,
George.

GEORGE

But the money has to come from
somewhere...

Fisk makes sure no one is listening.

FISK

Taxpayers.

(off George's confusion)

The government keeps the tax money
as gold. I flood the market with
shiny metal - my money doubles.
Taxpayer money gets cut in half.

GEORGE

You stole public tax money?

Fisk raises a glass, smiling mischievously.

FISK

To the greatest country on earth.
(swallowing)
Christ, I'm drunk.

Fisk stumbles out, leaving George to chug his drink alone, processing Fisk's confession.

Josie arrives next to him, lighting a cigarette.

JOSIE
Why the long face, George?

George realizes his best friend is no different from the robber barons he's targeting.

GEORGE
Fisk's a thief...

JOSIE
Everyone's working an angle and if
you say you're not, you're a damn
liar.

George slams another glass of whiskey - calls the bartender.

GEORGE
Hit me.

BARTENDER
I think you've had enough.

George slaps down a \$20 bill and seizes the bottle out of the bartender's hand. George departs.

EXT. STREET - NIGHT

Piss drunk, George staggers out into the street, swaying the bottle of whiskey. Josie follows him as he heads up the stairs to the elevated rail.

EXT. ELEVATED TRAIN PLATFORM - NIGHT

Josie calls after George as he hops down on the tracks.

JOSIE
George, where are you going?

As George wanders into the night on the elevated tracks, Josie follows, careful not to trip as she steps fearfully from slat to slat. The twinkling lights of the city stretch out like the night sky beneath them.

George mutters under his breath as he counts the slats.

GEORGE
72, 73, 74...

JOSIE

George, what are you doing?

GEORGE

This is Vanderbilt's rail.

CLOSE ON the steel rail, trembling.

JOSIE

Why've you got so much lead in your
pistol for Vanderbilt?!

GEORGE

(ignoring, wasted)

84, 85...

Josie suddenly spots a train approaching as she nears George.

JOSIE

George, there's a train coming! We
need to go.

GEORGE

You won't make it. 250 feet to the
station.

The rumbling builds, a DEAFENING RATTLE in the still night.

JOSIE

George!

Moments from impact, Josie grabs George's arm. He spins, kissing her. She kisses him back as he pulls her to the tracks, the train roaring over them.

SMASH CUT TO:

INT. HOTEL ROOM, FIFTH AVENUE HOTEL - NIGHT

George rips off Josie's clothes as she claws at him, both of them giving into their animal impulses. Her nails dig into George's back as she bites him, tattooing his body. George grips her hair as they both climax. Bodies collapsing into each other.

George catches his breath as Josie embraces him, looking over his shoulder.

JOSIE

We should do that again sometime.

INT. HOTEL ROOM, FIFTH AVENUE HOTEL - MORNING

Red Leary steps into George's hotel room, where George stands shirtless and hungover. Red casts a glance in the bedroom, meeting eyes with Josie sprawled in the sheets. She covers herself as George closes the bedroom door so she can't hear their conversation.

RED

Nice place. Real fancy.

GEORGE

What's wrong?

RED

Shang's been talkin'. He isn't happy about you moving in on his turf. Asked me if I'd be willing to kill you.

George sees his gun resting on the desk. A mile away.

GEORGE

That why you're here?

RED

I work for Marm, and for now she wants you protected. Shang causes trouble, I'll slit his throat. See you Sunday night.

INT. HOTEL ROOM, FIFTH AVENUE HOTEL - MOMENTS LATER

George returns to the hotel room, where he dresses in the mirror as Josie watches from the bed.

JOSIE

There's a bare-knuckle fight in the Bowery tonight. The Boston Strong Boy's fighting.

GEORGE

I got work.

Josie is not accustomed to rejection.

JOSIE

What kind of work is that, George?

Josie waits for more of an explanation - doesn't get one.

JOSIE (CONT'D)
Fine - I'll find someone else to
take me.

INT. BANK - DAY

SUPER: ATLANTIC BANK - SEPTEMBER 27, 1869

The Shadows scour every inch of a bank vault that's been robbed. In the middle of the floor is a gaping hole. The safe is open at the end of the vault.

SHADOW
Boss, check this out.

Byrnes approaches a Shadow, who points to a small discoloration on the outer vault door where George drilled. Byrnes rubs it, black putty coming off on his fingers.

SHADOW (CONT'D)
Doesn't make sense, the crew dug
through the floor and opened the
safe. Why drill the outer door?

Byrnes pieces it together, the truth even more confusing...

BYRNES
They broke in twice..?

SHADOW
Why the hell would they do that?

INT. DRESSING ROOM, OPERA HOUSE - DAY

George confronts a half-naked Josie in the dressing room filled with Japanese masks and other theater props.

GEORGE
Seein' if you want to grab dinner
tonight? You pick.

Josie is cold.

JOSIE
I got dinner plans.

GEORGE
Fisk?

JOSIE
Ned Stokes.

GEORGE
The guy with the big hat?

Josie doesn't show any weakness.

JOSIE
Big hat and deep pockets.
(off George's silence)
Go ahead - call me a whore. I know
you're dyin' to.

GEORGE
At least a whore's honest about her
work.

Josie snaps.

JOSIE
I got one thing of value in this
world, and you can be sure as hell
I'm gonna use it to get what I can.
And who are you to ride your high
horse?
(mocking)
George Leslie, the brilliant
architect.

Off George's silence...

JOSIE (CONT'D)
I saw all the money in your pocket
the day after the Ocean Bank
robbery...and the safes in your
closet. You think I'm stupid? I
know you're working for Marm. I'm
the only one who can see that
you're a damn lunatic masquerading
as a sane person.

GEORGE
(simmering)
You have no idea who I am.

JOSIE
I can tell you this - whatever
screwed-up piece of you is missing,
you aren't going to find it in a
bank vault.

George leaves, slamming the door behind him.

INT. BYRNES' OFFICE, THE TOMBS - DAY

A MIDDLE-AGED MAN in an expensive suit enters as Byrnes studies the case files.

MAN

Excuse me, Detective Byrnes. I'd like to speak with you about the bank robberies.

BYRNES

Who are you?

MAN

I represent Mr. Cornelius Vanderbilt. His money was in all three of those banks. He's concerned he's being targeted.

BYRNES

I'm aware of the connection, and his concern is noted. If he wants to speak further about the case, he can come down here himself.

MAN

Mr. Vanderbilt is a very busy man, but he would like to offer you any financial assistance required to catch the thief. He's willing to make a check out to you personally if that will accelerate things.

Byrnes fumes at the implication.

BYRNES

Get the hell out of my office.

As the man departs, Clubber enters.

CLUBBER

I just got a telegram back from the lock company. They said an identical model to the one in the Ocean Bank was delivered to a warehouse on the docks two weeks before the robbery.

BYRNES

Do they have a name on the order?

CLUBBER

Jack Howard.

Byrnes grabs the telegram from Clubber's hand.

BYRNES
Same alias - who else knows about
this?

CLUBBER
Just you.

Byrnes snatches his revolver from his desk and begins thumbing in rounds.

BYRNES
Have the men load up. Don't tell
them where we're headed until we
get there. We're not letting this
one slip through our fingers.

INT. ATTIC, MANDELBAUM STORE - DAY

George enters a large attic above Marm's store, light streaming through the filthy glass. Marm hovers over a THIEF, who is restrained by Marm's thugs in a chair.

THIEF
I swear - his wallet only had \$100.
I gave you half.

MARM
A little bird in a precinct said
the police report registered \$400
missing.

The man falls silent.

MARM (CONT'D)
You know what science is? It's the
knowledge of consequences.

Red Leary places the thief's right hand on the table and passes his knife over the thief's fingers, taking inventory.

RED
Which piggy's it gonna be? The one
who went to market? The one who
had roast beef?
(re: ring finger)
The one who had none?

The thief swallows his horror, barely able to speak...

THIEF
The one who went wee wee wee.

Marm approaches George, the threat not lost on him as the thief SCREAMS off-camera.

MARM
I need some fresh air.

EXT. STREET - DAY

Marm and George walk past vendors selling fruit and vegetables. Marm feels a red apple, seeing if it's ripe.

MARM
I told you to stay away from Josie.
Not everything with a hole's meant
to be picked.

GEORGE
She's not your business.

MARM
No, but you are my business, and my merchandise is in jeopardy. The cops have a special unit assigned to you - there's too much heat.
I'm sending you out of town.

GEORGE
You can't. I'm prepping a job.

MARM
I'm calling it off. Besides, a young man's meant to see the world.

George is frustrated - *what the hell is she talking about?!*

GEORGE
I'll lay low until things cool off.
We got a whole city full of banks to rob.

MARM
You gotta think bigger, George. We got a whole country full of banks.

GEORGE
What are we talking about?

MARM
Manifest destiny. Talent like yours shouldn't be restricted to one town.

(MORE)

MARM (CONT'D)

I do business with dozens of crews
all over the country and they all
got one thing in common. They
don't have you.

George pieces it together.

GEORGE

You want me to be your gun for
hire.

MARM

I line 'em up, you knock 'em down.
Split 50-50 with the local crews.

George casts a glance at the city - reluctant.

MARM (CONT'D)

You can still do your architecture
business between jobs - it's a good
cover - but no New York banks until
things blow over.

GEORGE

This wasn't the deal.

MARM

Name one thing in this city you
can't walk away from. You live out
of a suitcase in a hotel room you
pay cash for.

GEORGE

Vanderbilt's money is here.

MARM

What about Rockefeller, Morgan,
Carnegie? You gotta think bigger.

Marm goes for the coup de grace.

MARM (CONT'D)

You wanna target one man, or the
entire system?

I/E. WAREHOUSE - DAY

Byrnes and his armed crew of Shadows rush silently to the
door of the warehouse where George preps his jobs.

Byrnes kicks in the door, flooding through with his team. Finding the space completely empty...

CUT TO:

INT. BANK - DAY

SUPER: SAN FRANCISCO - 1870

George leads a local crew of FOUR ARMED CROOKS into a bank in the middle of the day. Two of the men fan out, splashing buckets of quicklime and water across the floor near the walls, which instantly creates steam, fogging the windows.

A CROOK approaches George in the lobby as George inspects the door to the vault room.

CROOK #1

The guy we paid to unlock the outer vault didn't show. What do we do?

GEORGE

Which one's the bank manager?

The crook nods at the BANK MANAGER, who stares back defiantly.

CROOK #1

Over there - we tried bribing him but he isn't game.

Another CROOK interjects as he nervously swings his rifle across the terrified hostages.

CROOK #2

I say we kill one to let 'em know we're serious.

George notes the HOSTAGES panicking at the suggestion. He scans from the restrained bank manager to a young terrified FEMALE TELLER, forming his play.

GEORGE

I'll handle it.

CROOK #2

What do you mean, you'll handle it?! Cops will be here any minute.

George grabs the barrel of the crook's rifle, forcing it to the ground. He gets in the crook's face, his voice measured.

GEORGE
Remember, calm is contagious.

CROOK #2
(seething)
You got two minutes, then I handle
it.

George glances at the clock as he approaches the female teller, who is tied to a chair and being held at gunpoint. George squats, meeting the woman at eye level. He addresses her quietly, intimately.

GEORGE
This your first robbery?

The woman nods, shivering with fear.

GEORGE (CONT'D)
You're doing great.

The sound of George's voice has a calming effect on her.

GEORGE (CONT'D)
Listen to me - I need you to stay
calm. Uncertainty causes panic,
and panic causes problems. So just
relax and enjoy the show.

The woman's eyes linger on George, who turns and departs.

A member of George's crew shakes the manager, threatening to hit him.

GEORGE (CONT'D)
Easy.

George approaches the bank manager, who stares at him in defiant hatred.

BANK MANAGER
You're that crook Jack Howard,
aren't you?

George snaps open his revolver, demonstrating it's loaded.

BANK MANAGER (CONT'D)
I've got a family.

GEORGE
I'm not going to hurt you.

BANK MANAGER
You're not?

George whispers so only the bank manager can hear him.

GEORGE

If I threaten you and you open the door, it makes you look like a coward. And you don't strike me like a coward. But what I am going to do if you don't help me is shoot that young woman over there in the heart. So you've got two choices - either sacrifice a young woman's life for some fat-cat's money and live out the rest of your life in shame, or save her life and be the hero. You got 5 seconds to decide.

INT. BYRNES' OFFICE, THE TOMBS - DAY

Byrnes reads the cover story on the New York Times: "HOWARD GANG PULLS OFF LARGEST HEIST IN CALIFORNIA HISTORY - FEMALE TELLER KIDNAPPED."

EXT. HOTEL HALLWAY - DAY

George steps out of a hotel room, suitcase in hand. He casts a glance back at the teller sprawled on his bed, her nude body covered in fig leaves of cash.

INT. BYRNES' OFFICE, THE TOMBS - DAY

As Byrnes sets down the paper, he picks up the next one: "BANK ROBBERY IN DENVER BELIEVED TO BE INSIDE JOB". Byrnes uses a sharp buck-knife to carve out the article.

CLUBBER

Howard's not our problem anymore.
I thought Marm's organization was
our priority.

BYRNES

My wife says I need a hobby.

Byrnes places the clipping in a drawer overflowing with articles about bank robberies.

EXT. BANK - NIGHT

SUPER: CHICAGO - 1872

A lookout at the end of the snowy block flashes a lantern twice at George, who paints a large circle of clear jellied alcohol around two wooden handles adhered to a bank window.

George ignites the jelly, which burns faintly. He then grabs the handles and nods to a man next to him. The man splashes a bucket of cold water on the window, extinguishing the flames. George tugs, and the circle of glass clicks out as if it were removed with a diamond cutter.

The shadowy crew pours through the hole into the dark bank.

INT. BANK - NIGHT

SUPER: BOSTON - 1875

A NIGHT WATCHMAN whistles as he wanders through the bank by lantern-light. He suddenly stops whistling at the sight of the vault door open.

The man nervously enters the silent, pitch-black vault. His light falls on FOUR MEN STANDING PERFECTLY STILL in various states of robbing the vault, staring back at him. The watchman fumbles for his gun. CLICK...

GEORGE

I wouldn't do that.

The man looks to see George squatted over a sack of cash, pointing his revolver at the watchman.

INT. BYRNES APARTMENT - DAY

Exhausted, Byrnes struggles to eat breakfast as his daughters eat oatmeal at the other seats, making a mess. Byrnes' oldest daughter sees him rubbing his eyes, concerned for him.

Ophelia enters, tossing a paper on the table next to him.

OPHELIA

You see they found Boss Tweed
hiding out in Spain?

Byrnes perks up as Ophelia cleans up the youngest daughter.

BYRNES

How'd they know it was him?

OPHELIA

Spanish authorities recognized him
from a Thomas Nast cartoon.

Byrnes looks at the cartoon featuring a morbidly obese Boss Tweed swallowing up New York City.

INT. WALLING'S OFFICE, THE TOMBS - DAY

Byrnes aggressively tries to sell Walling on an idea.

BYRNES

We're cutting heads off a hydra.
No matter how many arrests we make,
the crooks can disappear back on
the streets. Jack Howard walked
into a bank in San Francisco in
broad daylight and not a single
person can identify him.

WALLING

That's life in the big city, Tom.

BYRNES

Doesn't have to be.

WALLING

What are you proposing?

Byrnes withdraws the photograph his wife gave him.

BYRNES

Photography. We make their faces
known so they can't hide.

CUT TO:

INT. BASEMENT, THE TOMBS - DAY

Byrnes directs a nervous CAMERA OPERATOR as the Shadows restrain Johnny Irving for his picture. Johnny wrestles for dear life to hide his face.

Clubber socks him in the gut as another Shadow yanks Johnny's hair back, revealing his face. FLASH.

INT. "ROGUE'S GALLERY", THE TOMBS - DAY

A Shadow escorts a WEALTHY WOMAN down a hallway lined with mug shots - "The Rogue's Gallery". We see the familiar faces of George's crew - Shang Draper, Red Leary, Abe Coakley, Jimmy Hope, and Charlie Bullard. But no George Leslie.

The woman points to the photo of Johnny.

WEALTHY WOMAN
That's the man who pickpocketed me.

INT. COFFEE HOUSE - DAY

SUPER: PHILADELPHIA - 1876

George drinks coffee with TWO CROOKS who wear ill-fitting clothing. He observes through the glass storefront as a SECURITY GUARD stands watch outside a bank across the street.

CROOK
The guard we bought is on duty this Sunday.

GEORGE
There's only twenty grand in the vault.

CROOK
How the hell do you know that?

GEORGE
Because every Friday, the manager sends a telegram with the bank holdings to the insurance company.

INSERT: George hangs off a telegraph pole with a belt and spiked boots as he eavesdrops on the Morse Code, marking down the slashes and dots.

CROOK
To hell with that - you already have the combo to the vault. Give it to us.

GEORGE
Marm explained my services. You brought me in because I'm the best.

George hands the men the bag with his equipment.

GEORGE (CONT'D)
Monitor the cables until the score is right.

EXT. STREET - LATER

George walks down a residential street, when a young boy emerges, pretending to shoot George with a wooden gun. George buckles over, feigning a dramatic death.

He collapses on the ground in his expensive suit, then looks up at the barrel of the wooden gun pointed at his forehead.

GEORGE
You got me, Sheriff.

The boy runs away and George looks up to see a pretty young woman in her 20s - MOLLY - sitting on the steps outside a large home. Her plain cotton dress is at odds with the affluent neighborhood.

GEORGE (CONT'D)
Hey, you know any good restaurants
in this city?

MOLLY
I hear the Tavern's good, but I've
never been.

George dusts himself off, taking a second look at Molly.

GEORGE
You waitin' for a train?

Molly laughs.

MOLLY
The boy's mother locked us out.

GEORGE
Locked you out?

MOLLY
She falls asleep when she drinks
too much.

GEORGE
What kind of locks they got on this
place?

MOLLY
(confused)
What kind of locks?

GEORGE
Chain lock? Dead bolt? Warded
lock with a key?

MOLLY
It's got a chain and a key lock.

GEORGE
Come on.

George walks past her up the steps.

GEORGE (CONT'D)
What's your name?

MOLLY
Molly. What are you doing?

George examines the lock.

GEORGE
Can I see your hairpin?

Molly hands George a pin, watching nervously as he bends it and inserts it in the lock, feeling for the tumblers.

MOLLY
You a thief?

George fidgets with the lock, which releases. The door opens two inches, stopped by a chain.

GEORGE
Architect.

MOLLY
(suspicious)
They teach locks in architecture school?

GEORGE
Same principles.

George feels through the crack, touching the bolted chain...

GEORGE (CONT'D)
If I can open this door, you have to join me for dinner at the Tavern.

MOLLY
If you're a thief, I'm going to scream.

GEORGE
Got any thread?

Against her better judgement, Molly hands George a spool of thread from her purse. George ties the thread around the hairpin, then feeds the thread over the top of the door. He snags the pin underneath the chain, then uses the thread like a fishing line to drag the bolt to the opening. Click...

GEORGE (CONT'D)
I'll be by at 7.

MOLLY
Wait, what's your name?

George stumbles on the question, wondering which life she will inhabit - Jack Howard or George Leslie. Then...

GEORGE
George Leslie.

EXT. RESTAURANT - NIGHT

Inside the window, George and Molly eat dinner at a cozy candle-lit restaurant. Molly smiles and touches her hair.

INT. RESTAURANT - NIGHT

George watches Molly as she eats.

GEORGE
Were you born here?

MOLLY
Ireland - my parents came over during the Famine when I was six. My father read about the Gold Rush - he thought we were gonna go to California and be rich.

GEORGE
Where are they now?

MOLLY
They got typhus on the boat over. They're buried down the road.

GEORGE
Sorry to hear that.

MOLLY
What's past is past. I have plenty to be thankful for.
(beat)
You ever been out west, George?

GEORGE
Been to Seattle, San Francisco, Los Angeles, Denver, Salt Lake...

MOLLY

You went to all those places?

GEORGE

A few others as well...

MOLLY

Don't gather much moss, do you?

GEORGE

I've got nothing tying me down.

MOLLY

I used to dream of going to San Francisco. See the waves...see the sun melt in the Pacific. Guess life had other plans.

GEORGE

You can still go. What's stopping you?

MOLLY

Money.

George pulls his wallet out and places \$200 on the table.

GEORGE

Now what's stopping you?

Molly eyes the money with concern, doesn't take it.

MOLLY

Some things are best left as dreams.

GEORGE

You really believe that?

MOLLY

Not all of us were born with a silver spoon.

GEORGE

I showed up in New York with nothing but the clothes on my back. I earned everything I've got.

Molly can see George is upset. Smiles.

MOLLY

Perhaps we should stick to less controversial topics.

EXT. STREET - NIGHT

George walks Molly home. She wears his coat over her shoulders.

MOLLY

How about you, George? Do you have dreams?

GEORGE

I do what I want, when I want.

MOLLY

Come on - you must have some fantasy. Someone you'd like to be - - something you'd like to see.

George considers.

GEORGE

I'd like to see the corn fields again.

MOLLY

(laughing)

Corn?!

GEORGE

Where I grew up, the corn was so tall you could disappear in it. My family had a farm. I still see it in my sleep.

MOLLY

What happened to it?

George stumbles on the painful memory.

GEORGE

It's gone now.

Molly stops outside her door, taking his hand.

MOLLY

Someday you'll see the corn again, George.

She kisses George on the cheek, then turns to go inside.

GEORGE

I want to see you again.

MOLLY

What's stopping you?

As Molly slips inside the door, George catches a glimpse of numerous women sleeping in bunkbeds. The door shuts, sealing him out.

INT. COFFEE HOUSE - DAY

George looks out the window, lost in thought as a young family walks past.

The moment is interrupted as the crooks approach George's table, sliding a scrap of paper with Morse Code scrawled on it.

GEORGE

Not yet.

CROOK

What are we waiting for?

George pauses, his mind elsewhere.

GEORGE

The score's not right.

EXT. MOLLY'S RESIDENCE - DAY

Molly opens the door to find a box on the stoop with a note. She opens the box, withdrawing an elegant dress.

INT. OPERA HOUSE - NIGHT

Molly sits beside George in a box, watching *La Traviata*. As Molly watches, she slides her hand on top of George's. George turns, but Molly is focused on the show.

INT. PHILADELPHIA MUSEUM OF ART - DAY

George and Molly enter the Impressionist exhibit. George looks up at the ceiling, infatuated with the vaulting architecture of the new museum. Molly elbows him playfully, forcing his gaze to a Monet on the wall.

EXT. CAFE - DAY

George and Molly play chess at a cafe. Molly tips George's king, uncertain if he let her win.

EXT. STREET - DAY

George approaches a kid at a newspaper stand as Molly thumbs through periodicals on display.

GEORGE

Hey sport - you got the new
Scientific American?

As the kid digs for the paper, George spots the front page of the Philadelphia Inquirer: "CORNELIUS VANDERBILT BUILDING HIS OWN BANK IN NEW YORK".

George casts a glance at Molly, forced to make a choice.

INT. COFFEE HOUSE - DAY

George sips a cup of coffee as he studies the article, having finally found his white whale. The frustrated crook slides a folded scrap of paper to George.

Without opening it, George lowers the newspaper, ready to return to New York.

GEORGE

We go Sunday night.

EXT. FAIRMOUNT PARK, PHILADELPHIA - DAY

George lies on his back in the grass underneath the cherry blossom trees, tossing an apple to himself, as Molly rests her head on his stomach, reading *Around the World in Eighty Days* by Jules Verne.

George is lost in thought.

GEORGE

My job here is almost finished.
I'm gonna have to go back soon.

Molly tries to hide her heartbreak.

MOLLY

Maybe you can send me a letter.

GEORGE

I'm thinking about making a change.
No more travel - just focus on my
work in New York.

MOLLY
Start gathering moss like the rest
of us?

George hesitates on his next question, then...

GEORGE
What if I took you there?

Molly rolls over next to George on her stomach - doesn't want him to think she's that easy. She mocks him...

MOLLY
Dashing young architect come to
sweep Cinderella off her feet. Is
that what this is?

George touches her hair.

GEORGE
Hell no. I'll put you to work as
my housekeeper. Long hours and
shit for pay.

Molly smacks George with her book as he rolls on top of her. He pauses, looking into her eyes.

GEORGE (CONT'D)
Come with me to New York.

MOLLY
My life is here...

GEORGE
Name one thing in this city you
can't walk away from.

Molly pulls George close, kissing him.

INT. COURTHOUSE - DAY

George and Molly stand before a judge in his empty chambers. George is wearing a suit and Molly is in a simple white dress. George slides a gold band on her finger.

INT. TRINITY CHURCH - DAY

Byrnes sits between his wife and his daughters in the pews. He stretches his bloody knuckles, stiff from late nights knocking against the jaws of men.

A REVEREND recites from the Book of John in the background.

REVEREND
If we claim we have no sin, we
deceive ourselves, and are not
living in the truth...

INTERCUT WITH:

INT. BASEMENT, THE TOMBS - NIGHT

A CRIMINAL looks up from the interrogation chair to see Byrnes approaching.

REVEREND (V.O.)
If we confess our sins to him, he
is faithful and just to forgive us,
and to cleanse us from our
wickedness...

Byrnes begins hammering the man in a series of QUICK SHOTS.

REVEREND
If we say that we haven't sinned,
we make him a liar, and the Lord's
word is not in us.

The man lies unconscious sprawled on the floor, still tied to the chair as Byrnes stands over him...

INT. TRINITY CHURCH - DAY

Byrnes looks down at his daughter, who takes his hand in hers, loving him unconditionally.

EXT. MANSION - DAY

George picks the lock on the door of a large mansion on Fifth Avenue as Molly watches nervously.

MOLLY
George, what are you doing?!

George opens the door and pushes inside. Molly follows, finding the home empty...except for dozens of roses.

MOLLY (CONT'D)
Whose house is this?

George withdraws a key with a bow from his pocket.

GEORGE
Ours.

INT. LESLIE MANSION - DAY

Molly oversees as the finest furniture money can buy is delivered to the Leslie Mansion.

INT. MANDELBAUM STORE - DAY

Marm welcomes George into her store, walking through the hallways of the pilfered Versailles.

MARM

Congratulations on the marriage.
I'd like to meet her sometime.

George doesn't like Marm discussing his personal life.

GEORGE

I saw Vanderbilt's consolidating
his money in a new bank.

MARM

It's because of you - everyone
knows the existing banks aren't
safe with Jack Howard on the loose.

GEORGE

I read it's gonna house the largest
fortune in history.

MARM

It's impenetrable. Besides, we had
a rule about operating in New York.
Only do your legitimate business
here.

GEORGE

Vanderbilt's where this started.
I'm taking that bank - then I'm
finished.

Marm considers...

MARM

If you're going to do this, there's
something you should know. There's
a cop here whose been following the
Jack Howard robberies - and he
thinks you're connected.

Marm hands George a dossier with a photograph of Byrnes.

GEORGE

We've dealt with cops before.

MARM

Not like this. Decorated war hero. The man takes scalps. They even got a name for the bruises he gives people when he tortures confessions out of them - "Third Degree Burns" - pun on his last name. Might be the only man more dedicated to excellence than yourself, and he's under the misguided impression that New York can be an honest town.

GEORGE

What'll he cost?

MARM

Unlike everything else in this city, he's not for sale.

INT. BYRNES APARTMENT - NIGHT

Byrnes enters the apartment, taking his coat off as his daughters prepare for bed.

GIRLS

Daddy's home!

OPHELIA

Don't normally see you before the girls go down.

Byrnes plays it cool, as if this isn't the biggest day of his life.

BYRNES

Got off early. Inspector Walling got promoted to Superintendent.

OPHELIA

Who's going to run the Detective Bureau?

BYRNES

Me.

OPHELIA

Are you serious..?

BYRNES

We've got a reservation at Delmonico's tomorrow to celebrate.

Ophelia is speechless as Byrnes turns to his daughters.

BYRNES (CONT'D)
Come on, girls. You want daddy to
read you a bed-time story?

Byrnes sits in the arm-chair as the girls pile on top of him.
His three-year-old girl approaches holding a book.

DAUGHTER
Read this one.

INT. BYRNES APARTMENT - LATER

Ophelia washes dishes as she listens to Byrnes read a story
to the girls. In spite of his many shortcomings as a father,
Byrnes is a natural at bed-time stories.

BYRNES
...and then Robin Hood went to the
Sheriff of Nottingham and said,
"Sheriff, my Merry Men and I would
like to apologize for our criminal
ways." They realized then that the
Sheriff was just trying to clean up
Sherwood Forest from low-life
bandits like Robin.

The girls realize their dad is changing the outcome.

OLDER DAUGHTER
Dad!! That's not how it goes!

Ophelia smiles in spite of herself.

INT. BYRNES APARTMENT - LATER

Ophelia comes out to see Byrnes sound asleep in the armchair
under a pile of sleeping girls and stuffed animals. She
considers putting them to bed, then extinguishes the lantern.

INT. DELMONICO'S - NIGHT

Waiters dressed in white waistcoats and gloves move like
choreographed dancers, balancing trays filled with food and
expensive bottles of wine. This is America's first fine
dining establishment, and the finest in the world in its day.

Byrnes and Ophelia are shown to their table by a waiter. All
of the other tables are filled with the boisterous,
intoxicated upper-class of New York who effortlessly inhale
fortunes of food and wine.

Ophelia takes note of the pretty young women draped in diamonds and their May-December romances with the wealthy patriarchs of the city.

Byrnes reaches to pull Ophelia's chair out for her, but the waiter steps in.

WAITER
Allow me, sir.

Byrnes is uncomfortable, not knowing the rules of this world as the waiters pull both their chairs, seating them.

The waiter then places a napkin on Byrnes' lap. Byrnes doesn't like being fussed over.

WAITER (CONT'D)
Would you like something to drink?

OPHELIA
Red wine please. Whatever's the least expensive.

WAITER
And for you, sir?

BYRNES
Have you got beer?

WAITER
No, but we have champagne on ice.

BYRNES
Ice - it's August?

WAITER
Imported from Norway.

BYRNES
Water's good.

Byrnes realizes even that might break the bank - clarifies...

BYRNES (CONT'D)
No ice.

The waiter departs.

OPHELIA
Are you sure we can afford this?

BYRNES
I'm quite certain we can't.

They take note of the vast array of cutlery of every shape and size laid out before them - weapons of class distinction made of delicately etched sterling.

OPHELIA

Which ones are we supposed to use first?

BYRNES

I don't know - I feel like I'm in a torture chamber.

A waiter arrives with a bottle of Moet Imperial champagne.

BYRNES (CONT'D)

I didn't order this.

WAITER

From the man in the corner. He wanted to congratulate you on your promotion.

Byrnes turns to see George and Molly eating dinner. His mood darkens at the criminal lavishing expensive gifts on him.

OPHELIA

Should we go thank them?

BYRNES

(to waiter)
Send it back.

OPHELIA

Tom...

WAITER

The gentleman insisted.

The waiter departs. Byrnes seethes.

BYRNES

I'm an officer of the law. Do you know what this looks like?

Byrnes tosses his napkin on the table in front of him.

BYRNES (CONT'D)

It's bad enough that I'm eating in a place like this.

Ophelia can sense her husband's mood darkening.

ACROSS THE ROOM: George sits with Molly, dissecting a giant rib-eye slathered in hollandaise.

Byrnes appears, placing the bottle of champagne on the table.

BYRNES (CONT'D)
I can't accept this.

GEORGE
You're too humble, Inspector. You
should be celebrating.

Byrnes is visibly uncomfortable as George puts on the charm.

GEORGE (CONT'D)
I'd like you to meet my wife --

BYRNES
(cutting him off)
Molly. A pleasure.

GEORGE
You must be Ophelia.

Byrnes turns, perturbed to see his wife standing next to him.

GEORGE (CONT'D)
Glad to see you got a night away
from the girls.

OPHELIA
How do you two know each other?

GEORGE
Tom's been inquiring about my
services.

OPHELIA
What line of work are you in?

GEORGE
I'm an architect.

BYRNES
Banks mostly.

Ophelia tries to break the awkward moment of silence.

OPHELIA
Any recommendations for food?

MOLLY
Everything is delicious, but it's
all French so you'll need a cart to
get home.

OPHELIA
How often do you come here?

MOLLY
(embarrassed)
A lot.

OPHELIA
You must have a good nanny.

The question strikes a nerve with Molly.

MOLLY
We don't have any children.

OPHELIA
You're still young.

MOLLY
We've tried.

Ophelia can sense Molly's sadness. Both women could use a friend.

OPHELIA
Would you care to join us?

George interjects, knowing this will not end well.

GEORGE
We'd hate to meddle in your affairs.

George raises a glass, meeting eyes with Byrnes.

GEORGE (CONT'D)
To New York's finest.

INT. APARTMENT - DAY

Johnny Irving lies on a mattress on the floor with a cord wrapped around his arm and a needle on the table next to him. The room is filled with drowsy prostitutes who share his taste for escape. Though Johnny is only in his early 20s, years of living hard and shooting up or smoking anything he can get his hands on have aged him prematurely.

Johnny opens his eyes to see George sitting in a chair, watching him. One of Johnny's eyes is black and blue.

GEORGE
What happened to your face?

Johnny rises, scratching his head as he gets his bearings.

JOHNNY
Bastard Byrnes. Papers say you
been busy.
(resenting George
abandoning him)
Must be nice.

GEORGE
Where's Babe? I heard she stopped
going to the school.

JOHNNY
She's working for Shang.

George's heart sinks. As he turns to leave, he snaps his hand down, catching Johnny's hand in his pocket.

The two men meet eyes, both aware Johnny has lost his edge.

GEORGE
Get yourself cleaned up. We got a
job.

EXT. BOWERY - NIGHT

SUPER: FIVE POINTS

George cautiously walks through the Bowery section of the Five Points, the worst neighborhood in the history of America. A nightmarish Gomorrah conjured up by a feverish brain. Victims of the grinding poverty fulfill the only destinies they could given their birth.

George passes soot-covered, hollow-faced families cooking in the doorways of tenements and scraping out their squalid existence against the soundtrack of raucous taverns, dogfights, and nightwalkers plying their trade.

INT. SHANG DRAPER'S BROTHEL - NIGHT

George enters Shang Draper's brothel, internalizing for the first time the ugly face of the Faustian bargain he made when he partnered with his crew.

Shang is nowhere to be seen. Spotting the dapper young architect, the working girls in the lobby perk up.

GEORGE
I'm looking for Babe.

One of the prostitutes nods toward the stairs.

INT. SHANG DRAPER'S BROTHEL - MOMENTS LATER

George walks up the lamp-lit staircase, approaching a closed door. Inside, he can hear the GRUNTS of a john. George opens the door to see Babe (now 17) lying unconscious on the bed as a man twice George's size hammers away at her.

MAN
Get the hell out...

No sooner do the words leave his mouth than George is on him, tossing the man across the room, smashing against the wall.

MAN (CONT'D)
Son of a bitch!

The man pulls his pants up, attacking George. They trade blows in a chaotic, frenzied fight that quickly goes the floor as Babe lies motionless in the bed.

The large man overpowers George, straddling him as he chokes the life out of George. George claws at the man's arms, his face going red.

At the last moment, George yanks the man's unbuckled belt from his pants and slaps it around the man's neck. George yanks to the side, smashing the man's head into a table.

As the man rises, George kicks him in the face, sprawling him in a bloody mess.

Adrenaline coursing through his veins, George covers Babe. He takes note of the tattered copy of *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland* next to a bottle on the bedside table. George checks the bottle's label - LAUDANUM. Babe can barely speak, half in another world.

BABE
Where'd you go, George?

INT. SHANG DRAPER'S BROTHEL - MOMENTS LATER

George helps Babe down the stairs. As he passes through the lobby, he is confronted by Shang, who wields a knife.

SHANG
That's my business you got there.

George reaches in his coat. Shang raises the knife.

SHANG (CONT'D)
Easy, boyo.

George withdraws a stack of bills, slapping them on a table.
He pushes past Shang without a word.

SHANG (CONT'D)
She'll be back.

INT. HOTEL ROOM, FIFTH AVENUE HOTEL - NIGHT

George tucks Babe under the covers. She grabs his shirt.

BABE
Don't leave me.

George places a stack of money next to her.

GEORGE
This is two thousand dollars.
In the morning, I want you to leave
New York. Don't tell anyone where
you're going. Find a new life
somewhere far away.

BABE
I can't go anywhere else. New York
is my home.

George looks at her sadly.

GEORGE
I'm sorry.

George closes the door, leaving Babe more alone than ever.

INT. JIM FISK'S OFFICE - DAY

Fisk paces madly in his admiral costume, fidgeting to light a cigar as he has a total melt-down.

FISK
Thoreau had it right. We should
all fuck off and live in the woods.

George sits on the couch, confused by Fisk's behavior.

GEORGE
What's going on?

FISK

Josie - that black widow. She and that grifter Ned Stokes are blackmailing me.

GEORGE

Blackmailing you?

FISK

They're going to publish love letters I wrote to Josie in the newspaper. They aim to ruin my reputation.

GEORGE

What are you gonna do?

FISK

I already paid them half a million. Now they want more. Finally had to tell the cops - they've got a warrant out for Ned's arrest. I should have never gotten involved with that gold-digging bitch.

Suddenly, a rock smashes through the window. Fisk races to the window and looks down.

FISK (CONT'D)

Son of a bitch Ned Stokes!

Fisk seizes his saber off the wall and heads downstairs.

GEORGE

What the hell are you doing?

George follows as Fisk rushes downstairs. BANG!

EXT. TRINITY CHURCH - SAME TIME

Byrnes steps out of church with his family, hearing the GUNSHOT in the distance. Byrnes trades a look with Ophelia, then takes off toward the sound as Ophelia watches, afraid for her husband.

INT. LOBBY, OPERA HOUSE - SAME TIME

George arrives to see Ned holding a smoking gun. Fisk staggers toward Ned, staining Ned's shirt with bloody hands as he collapses at Ned's feet. Ned bolts.

George rushes to Fisk's aid. Fisk gushes blood on the carpet like a harpooned seal.

FISK

I put on a bloody good show, didn't I?

Anger welling inside him, George draws the gun Marm gave him and takes off after Ned.

EXT. STREET - DAY

George sprints after Ned, who knocks pedestrians as he flees.

INT. LOBBY, OPERA HOUSE - MOMENTS LATER

Byrnes rushes into the doorway to see showgirls crying over Fisk's body.

BYRNES

Which way did he go?

EXT. DOWNTOWN - CONTINUOUS

Byrnes runs down the street. Though he is built like a bear, he has the ground speed to match. Byrnes reads the panicked crowd, trying to divine which way the killer went.

Ned slams off a wall as he cuts into an alley. George is in hot pursuit.

George loses sight of Ned. When he emerges from the alley, Ned is gone, but the newly constructed Grand Central Depot towers before him.

George dodges a streetcar and heads for the depot.

INT. HEAD HOUSE, GRAND CENTRAL DEPOT - NIGHT

Ned barges through the ornate train depot, bowling over passengers. He looks back in panic to see George leaping over seats, looking more like a cop than an architect.

INT. TRAIN SHED, GRAND CENTRAL DEPOT - NIGHT

George rushes into the train shed, where the rows of giant steel trains snort out bursts of steam like sleeping beasts. The room is covered by a vaulting metal and glass ceiling.

George catches the flicker of a man's shadow in a plume of steam and chases after it.

INT. HEAD HOUSE, GRAND CENTRAL DEPOT - CONTINUOUS

Byrnes rushes against the tide of screaming and fleeing citizens as he enters the train station.

INT. TRAIN SHED, GRAND CENTRAL DEPOT - CONTINUOUS

All is silent except George's breath and the gusts of steam as he hunts for Ned. George drops to his belly and scans the undercarriage of the trains, spotting a pair of feet several rows over. George fires a shot, which PINGS off a train.

Byrnes hops down onto the tracks, hearing a SHOT ring out. He raises his gun, complete situational awareness.

George follows the CLICKING of Ned's boots on the stone.

Ned slips between a gap in the cars. He looks back to see George in pursuit and fires a wild SHOT.

Byrnes rushes through the steam as he closes in on his prey. Byrnes hears a burst of steam and turns to see the silhouette of a man holding a gun at the end of his row. He brings in the slack on his trigger as the smoke clears, revealing...

...George Leslie, gun aimed at Byrnes. George lowers his gun, but Byrnes doesn't.

Suddenly, George feels the cold steel of Ned's gun pressed to the back of his head. Byrnes was aiming at Ned, not George.

NED
Drop your gun!

Without hesitation, Byrnes pulls the trigger, ending Ned as blood flecks George's face.

George meets eyes with the reaper - smoke still curling from Byrnes' pistol.

INT. GEORGE LESLIE'S ARCHITECTURE OFFICE - LATER

Byrnes takes a seat in George's office as George uses a marble basin and mirror against the wall to wash the dried blood from his face, his hands unsteady. In the reflection, he catches Byrnes taking inventory of the architectural diagrams that paper the walls of the office.

BYRNES

You make all these?

George dries his face, playing it cool in spite of the fact he knows this man is hunting him.

GEORGE

Yeah.

BYRNES

Romanesque?

GEORGE

Beaux-Arts mostly. New York wants to look like Paris, and Paris wants to look like ancient Greece.

Byrnes is out of his depth - tries to get the conversation back on his terms.

BYRNES

Nice girl, Molly - better than that whore Josie. That girl was dirty as a theater seat. We've got her under arrest for extorting Fisk.

GEORGE

She's not my concern.

George takes a seat across from Byrnes. Silent - seeing what play Byrnes is going to make.

BYRNES

I know you're working for Howard.

GEORGE

(re: diagrams)

As you can see, I'm too busy to rob banks.

BYRNES

A man can live two lives.

GEORGE

You speaking from experience?

Byrnes knows he's rhetorically out-matched, but he's got the truth on his side.

BYRNES

I checked the bank records in that Ocean Bank Heist in '68. You made a sizable deposit days before the robbery.

GEORGE

Got unlucky with that one.

BYRNES

Got unlucky with a few others too -
San Francisco, Philadelphia,
Chicago.

GEORGE

I heard the Ocean Bank
investigation was closed.

BYRNES

Not for me.

GEORGE

Heard that too.

Byrnes glares at George.

BYRNES

Whatever you think you're doing,
you're through. I'm going to clean
this city up.

GEORGE

Only way to clean this city up is
to burn it down first.

BYRNES

My daughters deserve better than
that.

GEORGE

You really think you can make a
difference?

BYRNES

If not me, who?

George pours two lowballs of bourbon.

GEORGE

From what I hear, cops in this city
are just lookin' to make a buck
like everyone else.

BYRNES

Some are. But those days are
numbered. And so are yours.

GEORGE

We both know you have no case. If you did, we wouldn't be having this little tea party.

Byrnes withdraws a penny from his pocket.

BYRNES

You know how to make a coin stand on its end?

George looks at the penny - doesn't bite.

GEORGE

You here to do parlor tricks?

BYRNES

I'm telling you that no matter how impossible a task may seem, I've found there's always a way.

George knows Byrnes' modus operandi all too well.

GEORGE

Even if it includes beating a man.

BYRNES

Sometimes violence is the only solution.

GEORGE

What do you want from me?

BYRNES

I want a confession. Give me Jack Howard and I'll make sure you get a fair shake.

George realizes this man can't help him untie the Gordian Knot of his life.

GEORGE

Sorry - I can't help you.

Byrnes stands the coin on it's side and flicks it, leaving it spinning on George's desk as he rises to leave.

BYRNES

There's always a way.

INT. WALLING'S OFFICE, THE TOMBS - DAY

Byrnes consults with Walling, who sits at his desk, annoyed.

BYRNES

I want to reopen the Jack Howard case.

WALLING

Christ, Tom. Those robberies are 7 years old. I brought you on because you are a stubborn son of a bitch, but this is a waste of time.

BYRNES

Howard's been robbing banks all over the country, and I think George Leslie is working for him.

WALLING

You think a society man is riding trains around the country robbing banks?! Have you lost your mind?!

BYRNES

I've got evidence.

WALLING

Circumstantial! I read his file. The man belongs to the best gentlemen's clubs in the city. He goes to theater openings and art exhibitions. For Christ's sake, Tom, he shops at Brooks Brothers!

BYRNES

He's involved. It's only a matter of time until they strike again.

WALLING

I will not allow you to bring that kind of heat on this department over some hare-brained hunch.

BYRNES

Just let me bring him in for questioning.

Walling knows what 'questioning' means...

WALLING

Get it through your thick Irish skull! You rough him up and we're gonna have the mayor down here barking up our ass.

BYRNES

He's paying off the mayor?!

WALLING

No, he built his damn house!
(gathering himself)
I can give you rope, Tom, but not
that much. Stay away from the
architect.

EXT. MANHATTAN SAVINGS INSTITUTION CONTRUCTION SITE - DAY

George stands outside the construction site, taking note of the workers pouring concrete. He examines a stack of imported Italian marble blocks, using a tailor's tape to measure one.

INT. WAREHOUSE - DAY

George briefs the crew as they huddle around a table. He points to an architectural diagram.

GEORGE

The whole building is made of 24-
inch thick marble.

ABE

(in awe)

Jesus - the thing's a fortress.

RED

Can we dig underneath?

INTERCUT WITH:

INT. MANHATTAN SAVINGS INSTITUTION - DAY

Mirroring the opening of the film, the camera moves along the atrium of the cathedral of greed...

GEORGE (V.O.)

Impossible. Beneath the stone is
three feet of concrete.

JOHNNY (V.O.)

What about the vault door.

Gliding toward the vault - a ponderous labyrinth of bolts and locks set in an impregnable titanic steel door.

GEORGE (V.O.)

6 tons of steel.

INT. WAREHOUSE - CONTINUOUS

Johnny Irving studies the diagram.

JOHNNY
And the lock?

George looks up, confident.

GEORGE
A lock's a lock.

INT. GEORGE LESLIE'S ARCHITECTURE OFFICE - DAY

George sketches at his desk.

WOMAN'S VOICE (V.O.)
Life's been good to you, George.

George looks up to see Marm, uncomfortable with the trespass into his legitimate life.

GEORGE
The gift is nothing without the work.

MARM
How's the Vanderbilt job coming?

GEORGE
Bank opens in three weeks.

MARM
I have another job for you first.
Word is Dexter Savings Bank will be holding a sizable amount of government cash.

GEORGE
I don't want government cash.

MARM
But you do want me to finance your Vanderbilt job, and that costs money.

GEORGE
The crew's sloppy. We barely have time to prepare as it is.

MARM

I'm a businesswoman, and I will not let a score like this slip through my fingers.

GEORGE

When's the job?

MARM

Night after tomorrow.

GEORGE

There's no way I can get the Joker installed by then.

Marm picks up a photo of Molly off the desk, running her fingers across it.

MARM

Then improvise. Do a hard hit if you have to.

GEORGE

A hard hit?! Are you out of your mind?

MARM

Watch your tone, kid. If you want Vanderbilt, you do this for me first.

Marm looks around the office.

MARM (CONT'D)

Maybe someday you can build a house for me. Somethin' classy.

INT. DEXTER SAVINGS BANK - DAY

SUPER: DEXTER SAVINGS BANK - FEBRUARY 23, 1878

A KNOCK at the front door. The SECURITY GUARD goes to check it out as the other employees close out the books.

SECURITY GUARD

We're closed.

Suddenly, the lock is BLASTED out by a shotgun. Two more quick BLASTS blow out the hinges as the door is kicked in.

The guard looks up to see the demonic porcelain smile of a Japanese kabuki mask staring back at him - Shang Draper.

Shang smashes the man with the barrel of his rifle. The man stumbles back as the crew storms the bank, weapons up.

George approaches the bank manager, J.W. BARRON.

GEORGE

Mr. Barron, as the one man who
knows the combination to the vault,
I'll need your assistance getting
everyone out of this alive.

A FEMALE BANK TELLER tries to flee as Red Leary tracks her with his shotgun, identifiable by his shock of red hair sticking out the top of his mask. Just as he is about to pull the trigger, George knocks the barrel down. The gun FIRES, sparking off the floor as the woman escapes.

RED

She'll run straight for the cops.

GEORGE

Then we'll work fast.

Shang pistol-whips the bank manager George was speaking to, then points the gun at his face.

GEORGE (CONT'D)

Shang!

SHANG

(ignoring George)

Open the god damn vault!

The bank manager hesitates and Shang swings his weapon around and shoots the guard in the chest, killing him.

Shang pivots his gun back on the bank manager as George points his gun at Shang. Shang almost seems amused.

SHANG (CONT'D)

(to bank manager)

Looks like you better open the
vault or we both die, friend.

The bank manager steps toward the vault, opening it. Shang turns to George, gloating.

SHANG (CONT'D)

Good work, Georgie. For a second I
thought you were gonna shoot.

The men rake mountains of cash off the tables, filling their sacks.

INT. SQUAD ROOM - SAME TIME

A Shadow runs in, shouting to Byrnes and his men...

SHADOW
Dexter Bank is being robbed!

EXT. DEXTER SAVINGS BANK - SAME TIME

George and his masked crew haul out the sacks of cash where Johnny Irving is waiting with a horse-drawn sleigh. The men heft the sacks into the sleigh.

BOOM! A gunshot rings out, tearing one of the sacks. George looks up to see Byrnes approaching with his pistol raised, flanked by his army of Shadows.

George's crew takes cover behind the sleigh as Byrnes and the Shadows advance tactically down Wall Street.

George is pinned down behind the stone steps of the bank.

Byrnes and his crew leap-frog forward, alternating cover fire like the trained soldiers they are. Clubber takes cover.

CLUBBER
Reloading.

Another Shadow calls to Byrnes.

SHADOW
Moving up.

Byrnes lays down cover fire.

BYRNES
Go!

Down the street, George's crew is out-manned and out-gunned, a rag-tag guerilla squad against the most elite police unit in the world.

Byrnes sees a NEWSKID caught in the cross-fire. He runs and sweeps the boy up in his arms, delivering him to cover behind a carriage on the opposite side of the street.

BYRNES (CONT'D)
Down that alley - run!

The kid bolts as Byrnes returns to the war.

Red Leary nails a long shot, striking one of the Shadows through the neck. The man clutches his wound, blood gushing through his fingers.

Byrnes looks over to see the man dead in a pool of blood.

Overcome with rage, Byrnes advances like a force of nature, shooting and reloading as his bullets rip apart the sled the crooks are using for cover.

Nearby, Clubber has Jimmy Hope in his rifle sites. Clubber hesitates, then FIRES - slamming Jimmy in the gut. Clubber lowers his rifle in shock as Jimmy buckles, struggling to hold his cash as Abe Coakley drags him to the sled.

Shang gives Johnny Irving the signal to move, even though George is still pinned down 20 feet away.

SHANG

Let's go!

JOHNNY

What about George?!

SHANG

Go!

The crew piles onto the runners of the sled and on top of the money as they streak away, abandoning George.

George panics, fleeing down an alley as bullets PING nearby.

As Clubber watches his bloody victim hauled away, Byrnes runs past, snapping Clubber out of his trance.

BYRNES

Come on!

EXT. ROOTOPS - CONTINUOUS

George scales a fire escape, running across the rooftops.

Byrnes holsters his weapon and scales the building after George, trailed by Clubber and the other Shadows.

George leaps from rooftop to rooftop, narrowly making the gaps. He looks back, his terrified eyes visible through the dark holes of the mask...

...Byrnes closes in on him, an unstoppable train.

As George runs past a clothesline, he rips off the rope.

Byrnes follows George through the tangled walkways of the city built atop the city. George approaches a water tower on a three-story building, perched precariously on its wooden stilts.

He frantically ties the rope to one of the stilts. He looks up to see...

...Byrnes closing in! Byrnes raises his gun --

George ties the other end of the rope to his waist and... jumps off the building.

EXT. BUILDING - CONTINUOUS

The rope pulls taught, swinging George like a pendulum as he tumbles toward the street. As he swings...

...the leg of the water tower snaps...

...George crashes to the ground, rolling across the cobblestones in a brutal but survivable landing as his mask flies off in the gutter.

EXT. ROOFTOP - CONTINUOUS

Byrnes, meanwhile, sees the leg of the water tower snap and the Leviathan tank begins to pitch toward him...

...toppling over and flooding Byrnes and his crew back. Clubber nearly washes off the edge of the building when Byrnes grabs him, saving Clubber who dangles 30 feet from death. Byrnes tugs his brother-in-arms back to safety.

INT. WAREHOUSE - NIGHT

George enters the warehouse, where Jimmy Hope SCREAMS as the crew restrains him so a doctor can work on his wound. The doctor is covered in blood as he fishes for the bullet.

Jimmy arches his back as if he is being electrocuted.

DOCTOR
Hold him down!

The doctor turns and wipes the sweat from his brow.

DOCTOR (CONT'D)
There's nothing I can do.

George approaches the table, where Jimmy is hyperventilating. Jimmy looks up at George as he wheezes his last breath.

GEORGE
(to Shang)
We had rules. This blood is on
your hands.

SHANG
You don't run this crew.

GEORGE
No, if I ran this crew you wouldn't
kill an innocent bank employee!

SHANG
You don't have the stomach for this
work - never did.

GEORGE
This isn't about stomach! When we
knock off some rich guy, the public
doesn't give a shit. But you kill
an innocent man and now the story
is about a bunch of god-damn
monsters terrorizing the poor.
You're an amateur - all of you.
(off the crew's silence)
Dump his body in the East River.
Byrnes is going to be turning this
city upside down looking for a gut-
shot thief.

INT. WALLING'S OFFICE, THE TOMBS - DAY

Byrnes confers with Walling as George's kabuki mask sits on
Walling's desk.

BYRNES
I told you it was only a matter of
time until Howard would be back.

WALLING
Do you understand the severity of
the situation? No sooner are we
both promoted than this circus
happens. The public sees an
innocent man killed and they are
demanding blood. If not the Howard
Gang, ours.

BYRNES

I can break this case, but we'll
need to take the dogs off the
leash.

Walling weighs the mask in his hand.

WALLING

Do it quietly.

INT. LESLIE MANSION - NIGHT

George seats himself opposite Molly at an ornate table decked out with all manner of crystal and china.

GEORGE

Sorry I'm late - you didn't have to
wait.

Molly is silent, something on her mind.

GEORGE (CONT'D)

You okay?

MOLLY

Some policemen came by earlier.

Molly tries to gauge George's reaction. He plays it cool.

GEORGE

What did they want?

MOLLY

They were asking a lot of questions
about your business.

George dives into his meal, deflecting.

GEORGE

It's probably nothing.

EXT. LESLIE MANSION - SAME TIME

POV of someone approaching the Leslie home in the dark as George and Molly eat dinner.

INT. LESLIE MANSION - SAME TIME

George hears the CRUNCHING of leaves outside.

MOLLY

George - why is your coat torn?

George signals for Molly to be quiet.

GEORGE

Stay here.

George moves through the dark house. He enters an office where he withdraws his gun from the desk.

George hears CREAKING on the steps in back of his house, ascending. He approaches the door, gun trained on it. He can hear the lock jimmied, then the door begins to sway open.

George swings the barrel of the gun up and jabs it through the gap, directly into the forehead of...

...JOHNNY IRVING. George pushes him out onto the back porch, checking to make sure Molly isn't looking as he shuts the door behind him.

EXT. LESLIE MANSION - CONTINUOUS

George lowers the gun, getting in Johnny's face.

GEORGE

What the hell are you doing here?!

Johnny is panicked, coming unglued.

JOHNNY

I'm being followed.

GEORGE

It's the drugs. They're messing with your head.

JOHNNY

It's the cops - I swear! I didn't know who else to turn to. You always know what to do, George! I need your help.

George can see the kid is against the ropes, but George's survival instincts have the best of him.

GEORGE

You never come to my home! This is my life! This is my family!

The words sting Johnny.

EXT. FIFTH AVENUE - SAME TIME

Byrnes lurks outside in the shadows, watching George slam the door as Johnny departs like a whipped puppy.

INT. LESLIE MANSION - MOMENTS LATER

George takes his seat back at the ornate dinner table and silently resumes eating. Molly watches him, wanting an explanation.

MOLLY

George...

George cuts her off.

GEORGE

Can we just eat dinner?

Frustrated, Molly places her napkin on her plate full of food and departs. George watches her leave, sensing his world collapsing around him.

INT. FIFTH AVENUE HOTEL - NIGHT

George sits alone at the bar of the Fifth Avenue Hotel, sipping a bourbon out of a crystal lowball.

He holds a \$100 bill in his hand, his eyes lost in it.
(Note: In 1878, the \$100 bill featured a portrait of Abraham Lincoln on the left and an architect on the right.)

George dips the corner of the bill into a votive candle on the bar, watching as the flames consume the note. Before the flames nip his fingers, George drops the bill into his empty whiskey glass, where it burns itself out.

VOICE (O.S.)

Why the long face, George?

George turns to see Josie, dressed to kill in an evening gown. He returns to his drink.

JOSIE

You know why rich people are depressed? Because they have everything there is to have and it ain't that great.

Josie passes her hand over George's drink, touching his hand seductively.

JOSIE (CONT'D)
We could have been something,
George.

George chugs the last of his drink.

GEORGE
Yeah - miserable. Thought you were
in jail..?

JOSIE
I've changed, George. Let me prove
it to you.

GEORGE
Everyone's working an angle. You
told me that, remember.

George fishes some money out of his wallet as he rises.

GEORGE (CONT'D)
Drink's on me.

JOSIE
You may not believe it, but I
actually cared about you.

GEORGE
You always were a good actor.

JOSIE
You still are.

George rubs his eyes, his world going hazy as Josie talks.

JOSIE (CONT'D)
A criminal playing an architect...
or is it an architect playing a
criminal?
(laughing to herself)
I'll bet you don't even know any
more.

As George tries to leave, he looks up at Josie, seeing
double, realizing she put a knockout drop in his drink.

GEORGE
What did you do?

George collapses and ALL IS BLACK.

INT. BASEMENT, THE TOMBS - NIGHT

Over darkness, PANICKED BREATHING and the RATTLING OF CHAINS. A door opens, casting a wedge of light on George, who sits in a chair with his wrists chained behind his back.

VOICE (O.S.)

Turns out Josie and I had something in common. We both think you work for Jack Howard.

George looks up with bleary eyes to see Byrnes rolling up his sleeves as Clubber follows with a lantern. Byrnes pulls the Little Joker from George's coat.

BYRNES

What's this?

GEORGE

I pickpocketed a China-man.

Byrnes slugs George in the gut as Clubber watches on.

BYRNES

The Dexter bank manager overheard one of the robbers call another one 'George'. Sound familiar?

GEORGE

I was cursed with a common name.

BYRNES

The games end now.

George looks up - we'll see. Byrnes speaks calmly, settling into the task at hand.

BYRNES (CONT'D)

There are nerves in the human body where if you strike them the pain is unbearable. Up top, we've got the brachial plexus.

Byrnes punches George in the pocket of the shoulder, sending an electric shock through George's body. George tries to swallow his pain.

BYRNES (CONT'D)

Then there's the radial nerve.

Byrnes drives his knuckle down into George's forearm. George GRUNTS, fingers shooting out like a starfish.

Clubber watches uneasily as Byrnes picks up a club propped against the wall, massaging it like a batter on deck.

BYRNES (CONT'D)
Up next is the sciatic nerve. This is where the real fun begins.

Byrnes swings at George, hammering him in the sciatic nerve. George tries to contain his GRUNT.

GEORGE
You son of a bitch!

Byrnes strikes George repeatedly in the sciatic. George vomits from the pain, snot and sweat running down his face.

BYRNES
Your college degree and fancy clothes don't fool me. You're a common criminal - no different from Shang and the lot of them tearing this city apart.

George gasps as he recovers from the beating.

GEORGE
You think those thugs are the problem? You're dumber than I thought, Byrnes.

BYRNES
(mocking)
Who's the bogeyman? Me? Let's hear it.

GEORGE
(exhausted)
My family had a farm in Ohio. The Western Railroad wanted to put a rail line through.

Clubber recalls hearing about that rail line...

CLUBBER
The Western Railroad - I read about that...

GEORGE
My family wouldn't sell, so instead they bought the land upstream and cut off the water. As soon as my parents missed one payment, the bank seized the land.

(MORE)

GEORGE (CONT'D)
Cops like you came and burned it to
the ground.

Byrnes listens, surprised at George's confession. George lowers his head, nothing left.

GEORGE (CONT'D)
You want to know who the real
criminals are? It's the sons of
bitches you're protecting.
(off Byrnes' silence)
Are we done here? You can't hold
me forever.

Byrnes considers...

BYRNES
Not yet.
(to Clubber)
Bring in the camera.

The mention of the camera gets George's attention. As two of the Shadows set up the tripod, Byrnes turns to George, knowing he has the upper hand.

BYRNES (CONT'D)
You know what a criminal's greatest
fear is? Exposure. That the whole
world will see them for who they
really are.

George tries to mask his fear that Byrnes is about to destroy any hope he had at a normal life with Molly.

BYRNES (CONT'D)
I'm gonna make sure your photo is
hanging in every precinct in the
country. You'll bear the mark of
Cain wherever you go.
(to Clubber)
Hold his pretty face up.

CLUBBER
With pleasure.

As the final preparations are made, George realizes it's now or never. He calls to Clubber...

GEORGE
You're the one they call Clubber,
right? Heard about that guy you
shot in the back.

CLUBBER
Be quiet.

GEORGE
You know he's dead?

The news strikes a chord with Clubber.

GEORGE (CONT'D)
(reading Clubber)
Didn't know that did you...

BYRNES
Don't listen to him.

GEORGE
(baiting Clubber)
They got a name for men who shoot
people in the back.

CLUBBER
I said...

As Clubber gets in George's face, George suddenly snaps forward, head-butting Clubber in the face.

CLUBBER (CONT'D)
You son of a bitch!!

Clubber decks George, sending him tumbling back on his chair.

George collapses, still cuffed to the chair, blood pouring from a swollen cut on his face. He spits blood victoriously.

GEORGE
(to Byrnes)
How's my pretty face look now?

Byrnes turns to Clubber, realizing he blew their shot at photographing George.

BYRNES
We're through here.

The Shadows depart, leaving George gasping on the floor.

EXT. THE TOMBS - DAY

Molly approaches the Tombs, taking in the granite fortress.

INT. SQUAD ROOM, THE TOMBS - DAY

Molly enters the squad room, where the Shadows pour over evidence. Recognizing her, they all fall silent.

MOLLY
I'm looking for Mr. Byrnes.

INT. BYRNES' OFFICE, THE TOMBS - DAY

Byrnes pulls out Molly's seat for her, then sits at his desk.

MOLLY
You have my husband.
BYRNES
He's been detained for questioning.

MOLLY
I have a lawyer coming this afternoon.

BYRNES
That's well within your right.

Molly lingers, eyeing a photo of the gallows on the wall...

MOLLY
I need to know the truth.

BYRNES
We believe your husband is involved with the Howard Gang.

MOLLY
The bank robbers? That's impossible.

BYRNES
The two of you met in Philadelphia - same week the Kensington Bank was robbed.

The doubt begins to creep into Molly's head.

BYRNES (CONT'D)
Three nights ago, the Howard Gang knocked off the Dexter Savings Bank. They shot two of my deputies and killed a cashier. Search your heart, and tell me you know where your husband was that night.

Byrnes can see the truth in her tears.

BYRNES (CONT'D)
Even if he wanted out, George is in
too deep. You need to leave him.

INT. LESLIE MANSION - DAY

Molly returns home. She looks at all of their trappings of wealth: the grandfather clock, the chandelier... She picks up a sterling silver fork as the tears well in her eyes.

EXT. THE TOMBS - NIGHT

George exits the Tombs, his bruised jaw shivering against the cold as he raises the collar on his jacket. The streets are eerily quiet.

INT. MARM'S OFFICE - NIGHT

George enters Marm's office. Marm glances up...

MARM
You look like hell, George.

GEORGE
I'm done.

MARM
You don't get to decide when you're
done.

George won't be deterred - still has an ace to play...

GEORGE
In exchange for ending our
arrangement.

George slaps the Little Joker down in front of here. Marm eyes the device.

GEORGE (CONT'D)
You can rob as many banks as you
like. That's what you wanted,
isn't it.

MARM
I'm not a bank robber, George.

GEORGE
I'm not either any more.

MARM

What about the Vanderbilt job?

GEORGE

The crew can take the bank without
me.

MARM

You said yourself they weren't up
for it.

Marm slides the Little Joker back to George.

MARM (CONT'D)

No deal. Remember - you found me.
You asked for this. You will rob
that bank.

GEORGE

And if I don't?

MARM

We'll have a problem.

GEORGE

What kind of problem?

MARM

The kind Red Leary is better
equipped to handle.

Marm meets eyes with George, threatening.

MARM (CONT'D)

And don't even think about running.
I got crews all over the country.
There's nowhere I won't find you or
your pretty little wife.

GEORGE

Leave her out of this.

MARM

You made her a part of it. You
created all this!

George glares at Marm, death in his eyes.

GEORGE

One job - that's it. Then you
leave us alone.

Marm considers, offering the faintest nod of concession.

INT. MANDELBAUM STORE - MOMENTS LATER

As George exits Marm's office, he sees Red standing outside.

RED

Babe is back at Shang's packing meat. Guess she didn't want to be saved after all.

EXT. LESLIE MANSION - MOMENTS LATER

George approaches the door to his mansion, finding it cracked open. He wades into the darkness.

GEORGE

Molly...?

George musters the courage to go deeper. He approaches the living room, where a fire flickers in the hearth. He can make out the back of a figure seated in the armchair facing the fire. Dark hair visible over the high back. George circles the chair to find Molly, eyes filled with tears.

MOLLY

You're a bank robber...

GEORGE

Molly...

MOLLY

Don't lie to me. When we met, you were in town to rob a bank, weren't you?

GEORGE

Yes.

MOLLY

Jesus Christ! I loved you. I promised to spend my life with you. How you could you do this to me?

GEORGE

When I brought you to New York, I was starting to plan my last job. I thought you'd never need to know.

MOLLY

(overwhelmed)

I've been living a lie. Is your real name even George Leslie?

GEORGE

I swear to you everything you know about me is real. It's only the other side - the one I protected you from - that's a lie.

MOLLY

What about our money?

GEORGE

Everything we have I bought with money I earned as an architect.

MOLLY

And the money you stole?

GEORGE

I gave it all away - mostly schools and museums. It was never about the money.

MOLLY

Then why did you do it?

GEORGE

Vanderbilt destroyed my family. I wanted revenge, but nothing I do will get back what I lost. What's past is past. Now all I want is a future with you. Start our own family.

MOLLY

So you're done?

GEORGE

I have to do one more job. After that Jack Howard won't exist. I'll just be George Leslie the architect.

MOLLY

Why do another job if we don't need the money?!

GEORGE

I need to finish what I started.

EXT. ELEVATED TRAIN PLATFORM - DAY

George waits alone on the elevated train platform as Vanderbilt's red and gold car circles toward the station.

INT. LUXURY PASSENGER CAR - MOMENTS LATER

George steps aboard an opulent luxury car where a lone man eats at a booth - CORNELIUS VANDERBILT, "The Commodore". George is intercepted by Vanderbilt's SECURITY. A pistol is jammed in his gut by one of the PINKERTONS.

GEORGE

I'm here to see Mr. Vanderbilt.

Vanderbilt glances up from his food, taking note of the interloper.

GEORGE (CONT'D)

I was a colleague of Jim Fisk.

Vanderbilt nods, granting George passage as the train leaves the station. High above the city on an elevated rail, the car seems to be floating in the clouds, as if Vanderbilt operates on an entirely different celestial plane. George is meeting his maker.

VANDERBILT

My condolences about Jubilee Jim, but Fisk chose to involve himself with a very low grade of person. What business do you have with me?

GEORGE

George Leslie - I'm an architect.

VANDERBILT

Never heard of you.

GEORGE

I want to help shape the future of this city, same as you.

Vanderbilt appreciates the praise.

VANDERBILT

Commendable ambition.

GEORGE

Heard you're tearing down the farms in the Bronx to put in a new rail line. There's nothing up there but peach trees and cows.

VANDERBILT

People used to build rails to connect the cities. I build rails to create the cities. The future, Mr. Leslie.

GEORGE
At what cost?

VANDERBILT
Have you read any Darwin? He has a theory that nature works because the strongest survive. The poor are destitute because they are weak. If we help them, we do them a disservice. Wealth is the measure of a man's worth.

George begins to wind his way to his true purpose for visiting the Commodore.

GEORGE
Heard you've lost some money in the bank robberies lately.

VANDERBILT
Pocket change. The banks weren't prepared for fortunes like mine. Besides, I'm building a new bank housing the rail development money.

GEORGE
The Manhattan Savings Institution.
Took you a year to build...
(beat)
But somewhere out there is a man who spent his entire life figuring out how to get into it. He probably knew how to get in before you laid the first brick.

Vanderbilt resists the doubt creeping in as the train slows.

VANDERBILT
This is your stop.

George rises to leave.

GEORGE
As long as you're holding cash, it will never be safe.

Vanderbilt looks up, curious.

EXT. COMMERCIAL BUILDING - DAY

Abe Coakley stands watch as Charlie Bullard feeds a long wire through a keyhole on a giant loading door.

ABE
You remember the peanuts?

PAN UP to reveal a sign over the door with circus images on it reading: "P.T. BARNUM'S AMERICAN MUSEUM".

INT. MANHATTAN SAVINGS INSTITUTION - DAY

George enters the cathedral-like atrium of the bank, where workers are making final preparations. Across the room is a massive new vault door. He looks up at a cupola where sunlight streams in, memorizing it all.

He approaches a familiar man in a suit talking to workers.

ED SCHELL
Can I help you?

GEORGE
Ed Schell, right? George Leslie -
we met at the Ocean Bank.

ED SCHELL
The architect. I'm dreadfully embarrassed about what happened.

GEORGE
It's only money. Nice building - I was curious to see what you did with the interior.

ED SCHELL
Be my guest. Won't have anything valuable in here until the bank opens next week.

George checks his watch as he approaches the vault door. Suddenly, like clockwork...

WORKER (O.S.)
Good Lord - there's a damn elephant in the street!

Everyone in the bank runs to the front window, where a large African elephant lumbers past, causing a riot of excitement.

George doesn't look back as he withdraws the Little Joker from his pocket...

CUT TO:

EXT. MANHATTAN SAVINGS INSTITUTION - DAY

Flanked by cops, Cornelius Vanderbilt poses for a photo with Ed Schell as he cuts the ribbon, officially opening the bank.

INT. GEORGE LESLIE'S ARCHITECTURE OFFICE - DAY

George fills in the gaps of a diagram at his desk as he gives orders to Abe and Charlie. Johnny sits in the corner of George's office, scratching his arms.

GEORGE

Get me a pulley and rope that can lift two thousand pounds. They sell 'em at the docks.

ABE

When are we gonna memorize the vault?

GEORGE

We're using light for this one.

Abe nods and departs, bumping past a WEALTHY CLIENT in the doorway.

GEORGE (CONT'D)

(to the client, curt)

We're closed.

Charlie shuts the door, sealing the man out.

GEORGE (CONT'D)

Any word from the guard?

CHARLIE

No one's entered that vault since the doors were sealed. Marm's getting impatient.

George rocks back in his chair - desperately trying to think his way out of this one.

CHARLIE (CONT'D)

George, the bank was built to house one man's fortune. The only guy in the world who would open that vault and register the combination is Vanderbilt and that ain't happening.

Charlie departs as George runs his options in his head.

JOHNNY

How are we gonna rob the bank?

GEORGE

We aren't going to.

JOHNNY

What do you mean?

GEORGE

You're not cut out for this work.

JOHNNY

I'm cleaned up.

George meets eyes with Johnny - a sense of finality.

GEORGE

You're through, Johnny.

JOHNNY

I thought you were my friend.

INT. SQUAD ROOM, THE TOMBS - DAY

Clubber confers with Byrnes as they try to unravel the Howard enigma amidst the mountains of evidence.

CLUBBER

I followed up on that story Leslie told. Apparently one George Leonidas Leslie was sentenced to twenty years in Ohio for assaulting the cops when his family farm was seized for the Western Railroad. Leslie escaped from prison and is now a wanted fugitive. Should we notify the Ohio authorities?

BYRNES

Leslie's no good to us in Ohio.
Destroy that letter.

CLUBBER

There's something else you should know. The Western Railroad is owned by Vanderbilt.

As Byrnes begins to piece it together, Johnny Irving is led in by two of the Shadows.

SHADOW

He wanted to talk to you.

Johnny hands Byrnes an architectural tube. Byrnes takes note of Johnny fidgeting anxiously.

BYRNES
What's this about?

Johnny points at a WANTED POSTER for Jack Howard with a \$10,000 reward.

JOHNNY
Reward money.

Byrnes spreads out the architectural diagram, confused.

BYRNES
What is this..?

JOHNNY
It's the Manhattan Savings
Institution.

CLUBBER
Vanderbilt's bank...

BYRNES
Where'd you get this?!

JOHNNY
George Leslie's office.

Byrnes snaps to action, calling over to his soldiers.

BYRNES
Get your guns.

INT. OFFICE BUILDING - DAY

Byrnes and the Shadows move silently up the stairs, guns raised as they check their corners.

Clubber approaches the door to George Leslie's architecture office, flanking it with his rifle in the high ready. Byrnes nods and Clubber mule-kicks the door open.

Byrnes floods through first, ready to kill, as his crew follows with military precision.

BYRNES
Cup's warm.

Clubber flips through the blueprints littering the office.

CLUBBER

Jesus, this guy built a lot of
stuff.

Byrnes' stomach sinks as he takes in labels on the diagrams
on the wall - "Northampton, Ocean, etc."

BYRNES

He didn't design these. He robbed
them.

Clubber notes the boxes full of architectural tubes storing
dozens of schematics George left behind.

CLUBBER

There's gotta be hundreds in here.
He helped Jack Howard knock off all
these banks?

BYRNES

Leslie doesn't work for Howard.
Leslie is Howard.

INT. MANHATTAN SAVINGS INSTITUTION - DAY

Byrnes and the Shadows storm into the bank, flashing their
badges at the extensive security detail.

BYRNES

Thomas Byrnes, NYPD Major Case
Squad. I need to speak to the bank
manager.

ED SCHELL

How can I help you?

BYRNES

We need to check the contents of
your vault. We have reason to
believe you may have been robbed.

ED SCHELL

I assure you no one has entered
that vault since the building was
constructed.

BYRNES

I'm not asking.

Ed acquiesces, leading Byrnes toward the vault.

ED SCHELL

For security reasons, I must ask
you to take a step back.

CLOSE ON the bank manager's fingers twisting the dial. The
CAMERA PUSHES THROUGH inside the dial, where the Little Joker
twists, its gears registering the turns of the dial.

INT. VAULT, MANHATTAN SAVINGS INSTITUTION - MOMENTS LATER

The Shadows audit enormous blocks of securities stacked
inside. Byrnes confers with Ed.

BYRNES

We were never here, understand?
Until this matter is resolved, I'm
going to assign you a security
detail.

Clubber approaches Byrnes, pulling him aside.

CLUBBER

The money's all here, but he'd be a
fool to rob it.

BYRNES

What do you mean?

INT. LESLIE MANSION - NIGHT

George rushes to toss his things in a suitcase as he dictates
the plan to Molly.

GEORGE

We need to leave tomorrow. In the
morning, buy two tickets for the
11am train to Chicago.

MOLLY

Why? What's going on?

GEORGE

The cops know who I am. We're
taking the bank tonight and the
cops are gonna know I was involved.
We can't stay in New York.

MOLLY

Then call off the robbery! We'll
leave tonight.

GEORGE
It's not that easy.

MOLLY
(echoing George)
Name one thing you can't walk away
from.

GEORGE
Listen to me - I work with some bad
people. If I don't do this job,
neither one of us will ever be
safe.

George takes Molly's hand, reassuring her.

GEORGE (CONT'D)
Trust me, I have a plan. After
this we can go wherever you want -
we can go west - San Francisco, you
name it. We can start over.

Molly wants to believe him. Tries to convince herself.

MOLLY
OK...

GEORGE
If anything goes wrong, I want you
to have this.

George hands Molly a ledger.

MOLLY
What is it?

GEORGE
I deposited my architecture money
in the banks before I'd rob them.

MOLLY
Why?

GEORGE
So I could case them. Cost of
doing business. I've got accounts
open at banks all over the country.
It's not a fortune, but it's enough
to start over. Listen to me - if I
don't show up for any reason,
promise to get on that train
without me.

MOLLY
George...

GEORGE
You said you dreamed of going west.
Nothing's stopping you.

George takes Molly's hands in his.

GEORGE (CONT'D)
Please, promise me you will get on
that train and do something good
for yourself with that money.

MOLLY
Only if you promise to be on that
train too.

George embraces Molly, trying to be strong for her.

INT. MANDELBAUM STORE - NIGHT

Marm sits in the dark store.

RED
You sent for me.

MARM
Is everything on schedule?

RED
We're taking the bank tonight.

MARM
I'm afraid George Leslie's
usefulness has run its course.

RED
Understood.

MARM
Wait until he gets you inside the
vault.

RED
Yes ma'am.

INT. WAREHOUSE - NIGHT

Alone, George wears a blindfold as he walks along the chalk
lines on the floor in the bank mock-up.

INT. SHANG DRAPER'S BROTHEL - NIGHT

The crew is gathered around the bar as Red Leary opens a bag of weathered pistols. He hands the guns to the nervous crew as they all prepare to kill Caesar to save Rome.

Among the prostitutes, Babe watches, fearing the worst.

INT. BYRNES APARTMENT - NIGHT

Byrnes kisses one of his sleeping daughters goodnight, touching her hair tenderly.

He slides his pistol into his shoulder holster, then dons his jacket to leave. He looks back at Ophelia, who can sense her husband is going off to war.

EXT. MANHATTAN SAVINGS INSTITUTION - NIGHT

SUPER: MANHATTAN SAVINGS INSTITUTION - OCTOBER 27, 1878

The Shadows have the building surrounded. Without radios, they are positioned within line-of-sight.

INSIDE AN EMPTY STORE ACROSS THE STREET: Byrnes and Clubber observe in the pitch black. Clubber sees one of the Shadows hold up a fist.

CLUBBER

Still no sign of Leslie. It'll be sunrise soon.

EXT. ROOFTOP NEAR THE MANHATTAN SAVINGS INSTITUTION - NIGHT

Under the cover of night, George swings a grappling hook with its prongs wrapped in cloth to muffle them. He hurls the hook to the roof of the bank, where it quietly THUMPS.

George tugs the rope until the hook catches, then wrenches it taught, tying off the other end around a chimney.

Wearing black muslin hoods so they are invisible against the night sky, George and his crew belly slide across the top of the rope, hauling satchels of gear.

EXT. ROOF OF MANHATTAN SAVINGS INSTITUTION - NIGHT

The men strip off their hoods as George withdraws a bottle with a skull and crossbones containing muriatic acid.

GEORGE
Hold your breath.

Applying the acid with a glass tube George corrodes the mortar of the giant bricks in the side of the cupola, then slide them out.

He then lights a torch, tossing it 40 feet into the abyss, its glow sweeping down the immense cavern...

George hooks a pulley into place in the cupola, then ties one end of a rope around a stone eagle that soars over the front of the bank to anchor it, running the other through the pulley and down into the atrium.

George then withdraws a bundle of dynamite from his sack. Abe watches with concern as George affixes it to the base of the eagle statue.

ABE
I thought you don't use dynamite.

GEORGE
Rules have changed.

George lights a long coil of fuse.

GEORGE (CONT'D)
We got five minutes to get out.

INT. MANHATTAN SAVINGS INSTITUTION - NIGHT

Rope unfurls into the illuminated lobby as George and his crew fast-rope down. At the bottom of the rope is a series of large loops spread on the floor.

Shang Draper uses a crowbar to pop the dial off the vault and George Leslie pulls the Little Joker, inspecting it.

GEORGE
Right 71, left 16.

JUMP CUT TO:

Charlie whizzes through permutations with superhuman speed as George calls them out.

CHARLIE
79-8-24.

George tests the latch - doesn't budge.

GEORGE

Next.

Abe Coakley checks a pocket-watch, panicked.

ABE

We get two minutes.

George ignores him as Charlie spins...

CHARLIE

80-9-25.

George presses handle - KACHUNK.

Deep within the vault door, steel bars releases their grip
and the titanic portal yawns open, revealing only darkness.

George leads the crew into the vault by lantern, where they
see paper piled on the tables.

RED

Where's the money?

GEORGE

That is the money.

The crew falls silent, everyone aware that George's time is
up. Shang's pistol comes up to the back of George's head...

As George hears the CLICK of the hammer going back, he blows
out the lantern, once again casting his crew into darkness...

BANG! The muzzle FLASH lights the room as George dodges.
The first shot is followed by the THUNDER of multiple
handguns firing at George, the strobing muzzle flashes
illuminating George as he uses his photographic memory to
strike back at the pack of wolves.

Vanderbilt's fortune explodes into the air, sheets of paper
frozen in motion by each flash of gunfire.

We catch the flickering image of George punching Red Leary in
the teeth...

...trading blows with Shang Draper with animalistic fury...

...blocking Red Leary's knife before tossing him into Charlie
Bullard...

...knocking Abe Coakley's gun out of his hand as it goes off
in the steel wall, sparking as it ricochets...

...the thunder and lightning of bones and gunshots
CRACKING...

...George dives across the room, snatching a gun off the floor -- spinning and swinging it up. George and Shang face off, both pulling their triggers in a simultaneous flash - George's face illuminated by the explosion of light from his muzzle. Then blackness.

INT. STORE ACROSS THE STREET - NIGHT

Byrnes hears the gunshots and calls out to his men --

BYRNES
Move in! Go! Go! Go!

EXT. ROOF OF MANHATTAN SAVINGS INSTITUTION - CONTINUOUS

The fuse burns, nearly reaching the dynamite...

INT. MANHATTAN SAVINGS INSTITUTION - CONTINUOUS

George's crew hooks into the loops of rope. Dressed in all black in the torchlight, they are difficult to discern.

EXT. MANHATTAN SAVINGS INSTITUTION - CONTINUOUS

The base of the eagle statue blows and the eagle topples toward the street below...

INT. MANHATTAN SAVINGS INSTITUTION - CONTINUOUS

...acting as a counter-weight for the crew as they are ripped up off the ground and zip toward the sky in a giant bundle...

The eagle CRASHES outside the front door, narrowly missing Byrnes and his crew as they enter the lobby, which is empty.

INT. VAULT, MANHATTAN SAVINGS INSTITUTION - NIGHT

Byrnes leads his crew into the vault, taking in the few scattered notes that remain.

In the corner of the room, George sits slumped over, surrounded by bloody bank notes. Byrnes sees George's bleeding abdomen - knows it's bad. He kneels before him, picking up a stray sheet of paper off the floor. Byrnes can't believe George's error...

BYRNES

Registered securities. Largest score in history, and it's worthless. All this for nothing.

George can't even lift his head to get the words out...

GEORGE

Worthless to a criminal. Not to a cop.

BYRNES

You knew?

GEORGE

You want to target one man or an entire system?

George takes Byrnes' hand, gripping it as he dies. George's hand slides away, leaving the Little Joker in Byrnes' palm. Byrnes isn't sure what to make of it.

INT. BYRNES' OFFICE, THE TOMBS - DAY

Byrnes studies the Little Joker as Clubber addresses him.

CLUBBER

According to Vanderbilt's man, George Leslie visited him days before the robbery and convinced him to convert his money to registered securities. It doesn't make any sense - that's suicide.

BYRNES

His target wasn't Vanderbilt. It was Marm. He knew those registered securities would spread through the underworld like a virus.

A Shadow enters.

SHADOW

Ms. Irving's here.

As Babe Irving is escorted in, Byrnes turns to Clubber.

BYRNES

I'd like a moment alone.

Clubber departs, leaving Byrnes and Babe alone in silence. Babe takes note of the Little Joker on Byrnes' desk, triggering a distant memory from a warehouse in her youth.

BABE

Been a long time since I saw that.

BYRNES

George said you could tell me what it is.

BABE

George...?

Byrnes withdraws an envelope.

BYRNES

I received this letter from him, post-marked the day before the robbery.

INSERT: handwritten letter from George.

GEORGE (V.O.)

(reading letter)

Inspector Byrnes, by the time you're reading this, Vanderbilt and his rail money have parted ways and my career as a thief has reached its end.

INT. MANHATTAN SAVINGS INSTITUTION - DAY

Byrnes stands before the vault door.

GEORGE (V.O.)

If you're still wondering how I broke into the vault, ask Babe Irving about the Chinese coin.

He slowly slides the Little Joker over the shank, then clicks the dial over it, solving the riddle. He looks around to make sure no one knows the secret but him.

INT. LESLIE MANSION - DAY

Babe enters the palatial estate, taking in all the finery.

GEORGE (V.O.)

In exchange for her cooperation, I request that she be granted the deed to my house and all its contents. With regard to her brother, Johnny Irving, make sure he gets his reward money. He earned it.

Johnny follows Babe into the house, admiring his new home as he sets a large duffel full of cash on the foyer table.

INT. MANDELBAUM STORE - DAY

Marm's battered crew huddles around the sacks full of securities as Marm divvies up the score.

GEORGE (V.O.)

I expect by now the securities from the Manhattan Savings Bank have spread throughout Marm's organization and anyone holding them is wanted by New York's finest. In the event you need help locating them, I left you a map.

INT. BYRNES' OFFICE, THE TOMBS - DAY

Byrnes examines the letter confused. He checks the back side, finding nothing.

BYRNES
(to himself)
Map? What map?

INSERT FLASHBACK: George rolls up his diagram of the bank and hands it to Johnny. The two men trade a knowing look as they part ways, the betrayal part of the plan.

Byrnes frantically unrolls the diagram Johnny gave him, noting the title: 'MANHATTAN'.

BYRNES (CONT'D)
(confused)
It's not a bank...

Byrnes notes the labels on the lines: 'PARK AVE', 'BROADWAY'.

BYRNES (CONT'D)
It's the island.

Byrnes then sees that George has marked the locations of Marm and her crew throughout Lower Manhattan.

EXT. MANDELBAUM STORE - DAY

The store is surrounded by UNIFORMED ROUNDSMEN and REPORTERS as the Queen of the Underworld is paraded out in cuffs by Byrnes. Charlie Bullard is led out behind her.

GEORGE (V.O.)

I apologize for any harm I have caused you or the city you call home. I cannot undo the sins of my past, but perhaps I can help architect the future you seek.

INT. SHANG DRAPER'S BROTHEL - DAY

Shang sits with his shirt off, face pale and clammy. He nurses a bottle while a prostitute changes the infected dressings on his chest wound inflicted by George.

A long shadow casts over Shang, who looks up to see Byrnes.

EXT. TENEMENT - DAY

The Shadows rush out the back of a tenement in pursuit of Abe Coakley, who clutches a bunch of securities to his chest. He disappears into an outhouse, sealing himself in. The Shadows kick in the door, guns drawn...

...finding it empty. They look down to see Abe chest deep in shit holding the bank notes.

EXT. DUNES - DAY

A gray afternoon on the dunes of Coney Island. Red Leary scrambles to bury his fortune in the sand. He looks over his shoulder to see the Shadows bearing down on him. Red snatches the bills and takes off for the sea.

Clubber tackles Red at the water's edge. The Shadows kick the hell out of Red as they cuff him in the water. Red watches as the waves reclaim Vanderbilt's worthless paper.

INT. GRAND CENTRAL DEPOT - MORNING

Molly stands alone on the platform with her luggage. She scans the crowd for George, unable to find him as the train begins huffing out steam.

GEORGE (V.O.)

As for Molly, she deserves better than this. In the event of my demise, my dying wish is that you make sure she gets on the 11am train westbound.

As Molly looks for George, Byrnes emerges beside her. She searches Byrnes' eyes for the truth as Byrnes silently lifts her suitcase and places it on the train.

INT. TRAIN - DAY

Sun washes across Molly's face as she stares out the window of the passenger car, lost in thought. She sits up in her seat, eyes falling on the endless rows of Ohio corn as she makes her way West.

GEORGE (V.O.)
All I ever wanted was justice...

EXT. BROOKLYN BRIDGE - DAY

Byrnes leans on the rail of the Brooklyn Bridge, casting his gaze toward the Manhattan skyline stretched out before him. He rolls something in his hand - the Little Joker.

GEORGE (V.O.)
...Hopefully you can be the man I
couldn't be.

Beside Byrnes are his wife and daughters.

DAUGHTER
Daddy, what's that?

Byrnes hands the girl the Little Joker.

BYRNES
Make a wish.

She takes the Chinese coin and tosses it into the East River.

The camera PULLS BACK as the Byrnes family makes their way across the bustling bridge, returning home to Manhattan...

TITLE CARD:

"According to the NYPD, George Leslie robbed at least 700 banks during his career. Adjusted for today's dollars, the Manhattan Savings Institution heist was over \$60 million, still the largest bank robbery in U.S. history."

"After unraveling the heist, Thomas Byrnes founded the Wall Street Division. During his career, he logged 10,000 conviction years. When he died, the New York Times proclaimed him, 'The greatest policeman New York ever had'."

FADE OUT.