

HEROES AND VILLAINS

ENTERTAINMENT



1041 North Formosa Avenue
Santa Monica East Building, Suite 99, West Hollywood, CA 90046
voice: 323.850.2990 fax: 323.850.2991
www.heroesandvillains-ent.com

THE SAUCE

Written By

Chaz Hawkins

Management:
Heroes and Villains Entertainment
323.850.2990
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FADE IN:

INT. 66' CHEVELLE - NIGHT

SUPER: "TWO MONTHS AGO"

AL JENKINS (25), black, rides shotty with two other HOODLUMS (20s) while sharing a doobie. Through the windows, one side of the street looks rundown, and the other, opulent. Each shop more unique than the last.

The doobie burns down, and Al needs to ash it. He searches the central compartment for something to tap the excess into.

HOODLUM #1

Watch it, Al.

AL

My bad, dog. You got an ashtray?

HOODLUM #1

Check the glove compartment.

As Al pulls the tray out, the ash from the doobie falls onto Hoodlum #1's WHITE NIKE AIR JORDAN FOUR RETROS. It leaves a scuff. Hoodlum #1 SLAMS on the brakes.

HOODLUM #1 (CONT'D)

Dude, what the fuck!

AL

What?

HOODLUM #1

You scuffed up my retros!

AL

Shit, uh, my bad--I--I told you I needed an ashtray!

HOODLUM #1

Bruh, you cappin'. Get out.

HOODLUM #2

It's not that serious--

HOODLUM #1

Fuck you mean not that serious?
Ain't no scuffs on your retros.
Shut yo ass up. Get gone bro.

Al gets out. SLAMS the door shut.

EXT. DOWNTOWN COOLCHITOWN - NIGHT

The Chevelle skirts off with a SQUEAL.

Al flips the bird as the car flees. He turns--

A JUNKIE (60s), sunken eyes, seen some shit, pops into Al's face. Scratches incessantly.

AL
Fuck off, Withers!

The Junkie tweaks away.

Al shivers a bit. Checks his watch.

1:27am.

The streetlights BUZZ and FLICKER as he treks down the aged side of the street. Passes shop after shop.

He stops as he passes UNCLE LEON'S BARBERSHOP. A chilling rendition of the show tune "I'M BLACK" from the play Hair slowly fades in with a fog.

AL (CONT'D)
Hello?

The song GROWS and GROWS. Lingers on the air. Al glances across the street.

AL (CONT'D)
The fuck was in that blunt?

He crosses the street toward an...

EXT. HAIR - NIGHT

Al slowly follows the song to a massive white storefront. A RED, WHITE, and BLUE neon sign lights up. "Hair," and below it, "Home of The Sauce, the World Famous Shampoo Line."

Al stares at the advert. The source of the show tune.

The front door CREAKS open. BRIGHT WHITE LIGHT escapes.

Al stops. Investigates it for a second.

WHOOSH!

A feathery arm yanks him inside.

The door SLAMS shut as the white light quickly overtakes...

INT. TV COMMERCIAL STAGE - DAY

A white table with a single PURPLE bottle on it sits, alone, in an open sterile room.

PRISCILLA BLACK (28), white, this woman could stare directly into Medusa's eyes and turn Medusa to stone, waltzes to that table in an UNCLE SAM-esque outfit. Grabs the bottle.

PRISCILLA
Are you like me?

She removes the hat. Reveals long, straight, blonde hair.

PRISCILLA (CONT'D)
Tired of that same tame do? Good.
At Hair, we've birthed the remedy
for you, the Sauce. It's patented
formula can curl even the
straightest of hair types. Visit a
store near you to purchase your
miracle bottle today!

She presents the bottle, then squeezes a dollop in her hand.

Priscilla massages it into her hair. As she does so, she reveals a shower head to her left. Turns it on.

A JINGLE plays as "The Sauce" pops onto the screen in different BRIGHT NEON COLORS.

SLOW-MO: She washes her hair. Caresses her wet clothes and curves. Her hair says wash me, but her body screams fuck me.

Simultaneously, THREE VIGNETTES crossfade around her.

#1 - She rinses shampoo from the top of her head.

#2 - Runs her fingers through the body of her hair sexually.

#3 - As shampoo drips from her straight ends, they curl.

REGULAR SPEED: Priscilla winks. Reveals new kinky curly hair.

PRISCILLA (CONT'D)
With the Sauce, you too can have
the kinky curly hair you desire--

CLICK! An after burn BUZZES as it fades away. We've been watching a COMMERCIAL ON A RETRO TV.

INT. JASON'S BEDROOM - LEON'S HOUSE - DAY

SUPER: "PRESENT DAY"

In the TV's reflection, JASON (22), black, a kid that could have made it out the hood but gave up before he saw the greener grass, retreats from the switch wrapped in a blanket.

He slides past clutter and back into his magnet of a bed.

A framed picture of THERESA WILLIAMS (40), black, with a disapproving face and a SILVER METAL PICK in her hand, glares at him from his nightstand next to a prescription bottle.

The label reads "Williams, Jason TESTOSTERONE."

He SNORES atop a racy porno mag. Drool leaks from his mouth.

Creep closer...closer...closer--

WHOOSH!

A deluge of water washes the mag away along with his sleep. Jason snaps up like a meerkat. Wipes his face.

JASON

The fuck, Leon!

LEON (O.S.)
Where my clippers at, Specs?

JASON
I don't know, damn.

Jason glares at his Uncle, LEON (45), black, a walking ball of unresolved, and never-will-be-resolved, anger, with a mop bucket. A crescent moon tuft of hair stretches ear to ear.

Leon scrutinizes Jason's afro. He studies the pristine line work that traces his otherwise unruly face.

LEON
Best not be lyin' to me.

JASON
On my mama's--

LEON
Betta watch yo mouth, boy--

Jason snatches a pillow. Slams it over his face. SPLAT.

Leon gawks at the mag as water soaks through a picture of a voluptuous, but scantily clad woman in a headmaster's outfit.

LEON (CONT'D)

Damn, they musta made her in a lab.
She does it for you?

JASON

Sometimes--Hold up--Would you--Read
the room, Leon. Bounce. Fuck.

Leon takes one last glance at Jason as he nestles into his pillow. Leaves through the doorway. Tosses the bucket.

Jason takes the pillow off. Peeks at Theresa's picture as she poses with folded arms, an eyebrow raised.

JASON (CONT'D)

Fine, Mom. I'm getting up.

Jason rolls up. Slides his wiry legs off the bed. You could feed this cat for 30 cents a day. Imagine, Cinnamon from those Apple Jacks commercials with an afro.

He snatches the pill bottle. Shakes it. Only one more left.

JASON (CONT'D)

Fuck.

Jason pops the last pill, rises, saunters to the doorway.

He grabs a red marker. Scratches an "x" on the calendar hung by his doorway. Covers the words "PAYDAY!" in the square.

Jason opens a small drawer revealing LEON'S MISSING CLIPPERS and smiles. Cheerful for a stolen moment.

INT. LEON'S HOUSE - DAY

Jason drags a towel across the worn carpeted hallway of the meek single-story home while Leon scours the house for his "missing" clippers.

INT. BATHROOM - LEON'S HOUSE - DAY

Steam hazes the white-tiled bathroom, two sets of brushes and floss on the off-white, but clearly was once white, sink.

In the shower, Jason SQUISHES globs of shampoo into his hand. Massages his tall afro. The shampoo runs down his body.

As he steps into the water to rinse off, Jason's hands make their way to his waist. He glances at his pathetic erection.

Gives a defeated shrug, then slowly masturbates. The saddest yank ever seen, but he glances at the ceiling as the pleasure takes over.

A very faint KNOCK reverberates from the door. CREAKS open.

A SHADOW looms in the shower curtain. Rummages for a moment.

Jason's more vigorous now. Got...To...Get. There.

The Shadow raises an arm. Displays a knife-shaped object.

Jason's almost there when--

SKRRRRTTTT!

Leon rips the curtain open. Jason HOLLERS, jumps, slips on shampoo, and falls on his ass.

JASON
Boundaries!

LEON
Stop stealin' my stuff, boy!

JASON
Get the fuck out!

Jason sits up. SLAMS the curtain shut.

Leon GROANS, closes his eyes. Pinches the bridge of his nose. He looks up. Wrestles with something in his eyes.

LEON (O.S.)
Look, I'm--
(fuck apologizing)
If you spend your morning tryna
jerk off and run late to my shop
you won't get paid--

Jason hugs his legs hard. He hides his face in his knees.

JASON
I got it.

LEON
11am. No later.

JASON
Just have my check ready.

Leon nods. Furrows his brow. Eases to the door. Leaves.

After a moment, Jason rises as water runs down his face.

INT. KITCHEN - LEON'S HOUSE - DAY

The grimy linoleum has seen better days. The frigidaire leaks frigid air with a shut door, and the counters beg for Lysol.

Water streams from a faucet into a cast iron pot.

Flames. An eye of the oven turns on high, then lowers.

Spaghetti noodles spill into the pot.

Jason, with a towel wrapped on his head, in boxers, leans on the kitchen island. Munches on spaghetti. Smiles, but when surveys the place. His smile drops.

This is home. All 1200 claustrophobic square feet of it.

Jason digs through the couch and snatches a remote. He channel surfs. Unaffected.

A SCREAM QUEEN HOLLERS bloody murder.

JASON

Nope.

A MALE VILLAIN on TV laughs maniacally.

JASON (CONT'D)

Pass.

The NEWS plays. A REPORTER (50s), white, drones on and on. Below him, a banner scrolls on the screen that says, "African-American men still rumored missing. It's been two months..."

NEWS REPORTER

Another Coolchitown business was burglarized last night. Miscreants made off with thousands of dollars.

Jason turns the volume up.

NEWS REPORTER (CONT'D)

Victims are now calling the crook the "White Flight Bandit" as they only target white-owned stores. The Sheriff had this to say in regards to the crime spree.

A recording plays on the screen next to the Reporter.

On screen, SHERIFF YATES (45), white, the type of guy to have a gun rack with a gun rack on it, addresses us from a podium while he sweats PROFUSELY and chugs WATER from a gallon jug.

Hair runs from Yates' scalp like criminals. He dabs at the sweat with a handkerchief. Means well...most of the time.

SHERIFF YATES

Now, y'all ain't got no reason to squawk at me this early in the morning. Yes, we are investigatin', and, yes, we have leads. Comprende? Now, let me get a cup of joe, shit.

JASON

Coolchitown's finest.

Jason glances down. Barely notices the banner as--

REEE! REEE! REEE!

Jason whips his head to the clock.

10:30am.

He GROANS. Hops up.

Dumps the mostly finished bowl of spaghetti in the sink, then BURPS as he eases into his room and SLAMS the door.

INT. UNCLE LEON'S BARBERSHOP - DAY

The worn shop has soul...and cockroaches. Two barber chairs line each side. A retro TV hangs on the wall.

PERCY (27), black, kind-hearted but spacey, and HAROLD (35), black, lieutenant smart-ass, sit in their barbering chairs while Leon stands at his, faces them. Harold reads the paper.

An iconic black culture flick like "FRIDAY" plays until--

Static CRACKLES.

LEON

Dammit, not again.

HAROLD

(won't be bothered)

You pay the feds?

PERCY

'Course the old man did. Just needs a little...

(smacks the TV)

There. We. Go.

The TV screen just quits.

HAROLD

Days here might be short, but least
you have a future in electrical.

Harold and Leon laugh while Percy stews.

CHRINNNNGG!

Jason slides inside. Snags an apron and broom off the wall.

PERCY

CP time be damned. Pay up, Leon.

JASON

Gonna lose all your money betting
against me, Unc.

LEON

Yeah, yeah, yeah.

Leon gives each of them five bucks.

LEON (CONT'D)

Don't spend it all in one place.

Jason stuffs Apollonius Rhodius' *THE ARGONAUTICA* into a large bookcase full of other classics: Shakespeare's *OTHELLO*, Harriet Beecher Stowe's *UNCLE TOM'S CABIN*, among many others.

Jason turns. The Barbers joke and mess with each other. A family shop, but he's on the outside. Just watching the show. His eyes a quote emblazoned on the wall.

"Suffer for a day; earn a lifetime of bliss. - Theresa W."

CHRINNNNGG!

SHERIFF YATES (O.S.)

You boys got time for a cut?

Yates parades inside with his gallon jug of water in one hand, and his silver TRIDENT-SHAPED belt buckle in the other.

Leon fake-smiles as Yates PLOPS down in his chair. Combs his caterpillar porn-stache. The other Barbers sit in silence.

Jason sweeps around the Barbers' chairs. Avoids eye contact with the Sheriff. In fact, everyone avoids Yates, but Leon.

SHERIFF YATES (CONT'D)

Y'all catch Jayson Tatum's triple
double, yesterday? He must have
gone to a prep school to have
fundamentals like that.

LEON

You don't have to do that.

SHERIFF YATES

Do what?

PERCY

Talk.

Yates glances at the busted TV. Dabs at sweat on his face.

SHERIFF YATES

So business is good--

Leon nicks Yates' lip near the mustache.

SHERIFF YATES (CONT'D)

Watch your clippers!

LEON

It would be easier to cut your mustache if it didn't move.

SHERIFF YATES

Let me take a sip.

Yates chugs water from his jug. They all watch uncomfortably.

PERCY

What's with the jug of water?

SHERIFF YATES

Healthy men need at least 120 ounces a day. You thirsty? I can share. There may be backwash but--

PERCY

Nah, I'll just get a cup or a water bottle like a normal person.

Leon goes back to work. Harold puts down his paper.

HAROLD

Well then, y'all making any headway on the missing townies?

Leon lets out a defeated sigh, then glares at Harold who puts his hands in the air making a "don't shoot," gesture.

SHERIFF YATES

That's just a rumor. Got one of the little guys on that one. I'm on the "White Flight Bandit" case.

HAROLD
(under his breath)
Of course you are...

SHERIFF YATES
We protect our family first 'round
here. Chase rumors second.

LEON
Don't mind him. Just let me finish
up here.

Jason peeks out the storefront window at the SHOPPERS (18+), white, walking in and out of the shops across the street dressed like hipsters. Beanies, flannels, jeans.

Queue in line down the sidewalk to "HAIR." Everyone in line has STRAIGHT HAIR, but customers exit with ONLY CURLY HAIR.

MEDDY FREEMAN (22), black, the inner-city kid that surprises everyone by getting into five ivy league schools, glares at "Hair," then peeks across the street at Leon's. Sympathy.

Jason does a double take, but, when he looks back, Meddy's gone. Just the sea of whiteness remains. Jason's lost in it.

SHERIFF YATES
You clearly have eyes on the
streets. Know anything?
(waits for a response)
Hey...Hey, kid!

Jason shakes free of his trance. Whips to Yates while everyone stares at him. It's tense.

SHERIFF YATES
Well?

JASON
No, sir. Thanks for your service.

SHERIFF YATES
Atta boy. Had me gettin' a little
itchy at the hip for a second.

Yates hops up from his chair. Chugs water from his jug.

SHERIFF YATES (CONT'D)
You know how to speak to authority.
Won't end up like yo mama, no way.

LEON
That'll be \$25.

SHERIFF YATES

Be careful, now, Leon. These prices
might drive even the most loyal
customers out the door.

LEON

(that's the plan)
Wuldn't think of it.

Sheriff Yates whistles to an aged, racist tune such as the "BULLY SONG" by May Irwin as he exits.

The cash register pops out. Jason tenders the cash with a SHFF...SHFF...

LATER...

SHFF...

Jason puts the last of the cash away as Leon collects everyone's stash boxes, then Jason sweeps with a blank expression. His mind is elsewhere.

Harold and Percy stop on their way out.

PERCY

You good? Look like you seen a ghost.

JASON

Um, yea--it's just--I--

Harold puts a hand on Jason's shoulder as he glances across the street again to where Meddy once stood.

HAROLD

Don't pay Yates no mind. Dude came out the womb bald and blabbering.

Jason nods, then waves goodbye as Harold and Percy leave.

TV STATIC SIZZLES throughout the shop. It GROWS with every one of Jason's broom strokes. Until--

BANG!

Jason drops like gunshots just rang out. He tracks the sound to the back office. The door's ajar.

Through the crack, Leon counts the till at his worn desk. It's short...again. He lifts his fist. Reveals a new dent among many others.

Jason slips inside...

INT. BACK OFFICE - UNCLE LEON'S BARBERSHOP - NIGHT

A surprised Leon frantically wipes his face and forces a smile. Jason awkwardly hovers by the door.

JASON
You all right, Leon--

LEON
Some doors ain't s'posed to be opened, negro!

Jason nods uneasily as Leon counts bills.

LEON (CONT'D)
Just another weak day. That shop across the street is stranglin' us...I gotta let you go.

JASON
But what about what you said to chrome dome and the petty bets--

LEON
Regulars duckin' me. You seen the shop. Dead as roadkill. It's been--

Leon shows his cellphone with a barbering app open.

THE SCREEN: The kind faces of BLACK MEN by boxes checked as MISSED APPOINTMENTS. Al's face shines amongst them.

LEON (CONT'D)
Gotta suffer for a day...

Jason surveys the dilapidated office. Wallpaper peels, linoleum's cracked, the writing is LITERALLY on the wall. He lands on a large portrait of Theresa.

On the frame, "In loving memory of Theresa Williams. A mother, sister, and savvy businesswoman."

JASON
This can't be the bliss she was talking about, Leon.

LEON
Bliss? When Theresa was around, it was like the whole hood got silent. No gangs, burglars, or kidnappings. That was bliss. Remember that?

JASON

It's hard for me to remember much
from back then.

(pleads)

But, Leon, I need this job. I gotta
get my pills!

Leon BANGS on the desk. Turns back from that same picture.

LEON

No, you don't! You know why I make
that same bet every day? Because I
pray that one day you just won't
show up no more. That way one of us
will make it out of here. This shop
died when she did. Nothing's savin'
it, Specs.

Jason tenses a fist. A quiet rage.

LEON (CONT'D)

Now, go on. You're practically
furniture around here, and the shop
don't need another bookcase.

Jason turns in his apron. Gives Leon the broom. Stops in the
doorway. Admires the place one last time. Walks out.

CHHRRINGGGG!

The front door SLAMS. Leon sits. Exhales. That hurt. Glances
at Theresa's picture.

INT. DOWNTOWN COOLCHITOWN - NIGHT

Darkness envelops the shops. A ghostly fog. Rain's coming.

Jason sits on a bench on the sidewalk. TAPS his foot. Waits.
He looks both ways. No cars.

A KETTLE OF VULTURES SQUAWKS angrily at him from their perch
above the shop.

Jason eyes them, then takes out a cellphone. Texts "O."

The text reads, "Where u at, bruh?" Jason, then swipes
through photos in his phone.

Lingers on one of Theresa in front of a CREAM colored HOOPTY
with TAN SEATS.

He grimaces, then shivers. Forces himself to look away. Both
anger and pain wear on his brow. He rises. Tries to light a--

JUNKIE

Any change?

Out of nowhere, the Junkie hovers over Jason's shoulder. He jumps and turns a 180. Ready to fight.

JUNKIE (CONT'D)

Change?

JASON

Dammit, Withers. Get outta here.

As the Junkie walks off, the RED, WHITE, and BLUE neon sign lights up at Hair. Jason raises an eyebrow. Recognition. Peers back at Leon's.

The "Uncle" label on the storefront peels back and waves in the wind. Underneath, a slightly off white "TH" endures.

He surveys the beaten up, rustic, and damn-near-ready-for-demolition buildings. ORANGE "For Sale" and "Closed" signs cover most of the storefronts. Poor people strewn about.

Out of nowhere, a "NOW HIRING JANITOR" sign POPS on next to the Sauce's ad on Hair's storefront featuring Priscilla.

Its BUZZ and color catches Jason's attention.

Jason smirks and rubs his hands together. A plan forms. He checks both ways. Slips over. Shoppers gawk as he crosses.

EXT. HAIR - NIGHT

Shoppers hip-check Jason as he struggles past them to the door. On it, a box full of pens and papers hangs.

INSERT - APPLICATION TO HAIR

Just four questions. One for Jason's FULL NAME. He writes it. CELL PHONE NUMBER. Check. RACE. Black as fuck. HAIR TYPE.

BACK TO HAIR

Jason scrutinizes the paper. Confused. Plays with his hair.

JASON

Curly it is.

Writes it down.

P.O.V. OF SOMEONE WATCHING JASON FROM BEHIND

BREATHY. Strained.

Jason slips the paper in the slot, but it's too bent to fit.

JASON (CONT'D)
Oh, come on.

He struggles to flatten it out.

The P.O.V. creeps closer to Jason. Predatory.

BACK TO SCENE

Jason slides the app inside. A SHADOW looms behind him.

A hand reaches out from the Shadow to his shoulder.

JASON (CONT'D)
Maybe they'll make room for a
bookcase--

A distant, mysterious bell DING, DING, DINGS!

At the sound, the hand instinctively retreats.

Startled, Jason surveys the street. Nothing. Until, he spots a wooden post. As he eases over, a Beater parks on the street. Cuts the lights. A PERSON exits.

THE WOODEN POST

MISSING PERSONS SIGNS cover it. They look more like MUGSHOTS. There's more white paper than pole. All of the victims, BLACK MEN. Among them, one of Leon's missing cuts, Al Jenkins.

A WRINKLED HAND slips behind the pole near Al's mugshot, but Jason never sees it as--

SOMEONE snatches his shoulder.

JASON (CONT'D)
Fuck!

Shocked, Jason swings at ORENTHAL "O" JACKSON (25), if the hood swallowed MLK's future before he knew he had a dream.

O
Bruh--

Jason knocks him the fuck out. The Shoppers gawk at the outburst. Many record it.

SHOPPERS
World Star! World Star! World Star!

Jason side eyes them. Drags O toward the Beater.

EXT. ABANDONED PARKING LOT - DOWNTOWN COOLCHITOWN - NIGHT

The Beater HUMS alone in the lot. Cracks and potholes pepper the concrete. The city stopped fixing the lot years ago. Cold streetlights loom above. They BUZZ and FLICKER.

INT. O'S BEATER - ABANDONED PARKING LOT - NIGHT

Plastic wrappers and bottles litter the messy Beater.

Jason sits behind the wheel. Swipes through videos on World Star Hip Hop News. Chuckles as he watches a WHITE GIRL (18) slide across an oily floor in a video. Couple thousand views.

He spots a video named, "You Got Knocked TF Out - Coolchitown Remix." Jason slugs O in the poorly edited video. Hundreds of thousands of views. Jason exhales. Focuses on O.

JASON

O? I didn't hit you that hard.

Jason glances back at his phone. RIOTOUS APPLAUSE.

JASON (CONT'D)

They took no time with that. Shit.

O's eyes snap open. He flails back to life.

JASON (CONT'D)

Chill, brah. Here's some ice.

O

I oughta smack your ass for that.

O snatches the pack.

O (CONT'D)

Bein' shiesty and shit. Spill it.

JASON

Leon fired me.

O

Damn...hol' up...

O starts doing math on his fingers.

O (CONT'D)

How you get fired on your payday?

JASON

Leon can't pay the bills no more.

Jason lights a joint. Puffs a few times, then offers it.

JASON (CONT'D)
I figured that new Hair place has a
line out the ass, commercials, and
stuff. I could make a bag.

O
White folks take all the good shit.

O lovingly watches the blunt's slow burn.

O (CONT'D)
'Cept this here stank, of course.

JASON
That's capitalism.

O
It's gentrification, my brother.

JASON
You sound like that burglar they
talk about on the news. The...uh--

O
The White Flight Bandit.

O sits back in awe like he's looking at all his hopes and
dreams right outside his windshield.

O (CONT'D)
That's a hood hero, right there.

JASON
I'm not so sure.

O
The bandit juugs and finesses to
give back to people like us.

JASON
I ain't seen shit, man.

O
Lighten up. You wouldn't say that
if you knew the bandit.

JASON
'Cause you know the bandit, right?

O's nervously quiet. The realization hits Jason.

JASON (CONT'D)
You fucking idiot. What are you involved in now?

O
Nothing. Honest to God.
(relents)
Well...maybe something. The Bandit has the gangs in a cease fire.
Peace. In the hood. Only your Mom could do that--

He's crossed a line.

O (CONT'D)
My bad. I didn't--

Jason finishes the joint.

JASON
Drop me off at Leon's, yeah?

O
Need you to get out my seat, first.

The Two pop the doors open.

EXT. ABANDONED PARKING LOT - NIGHT

As they amble around the car, Jason glances at O.

JASON
Your eye swollen as shit.

O
Believe me, if this shit shuts, imma be at your door with them medical bills like my baby mama.

JASON
You ain't have no baby mamas.

O
A nigga can dream though.

Jason sits shotty as O DRUMS on the roof. Smiles.

O (CONT'D)
Then wake in a cold sweat, gahdamn.

O hops in. Starts the car. SQUEALS off.

EXT. ALLEYWAY - DOWNTOWN COOLCHITOWN - NIGHT

With a flashlight in her mouth and completely UNRECOGNIZABLE in ALL BLACK, Meddy tosses a grappling hook on a building.

It's Hair.

She pulls the rope taut. Tests it. Then scales the wall.

EXT. ROOFTOP OF HAIR - DOWNTOWN COOLCHITOWN - NIGHT

Meddy's hand reaches over the ledge. She climbs over, then dusts herself off. She glances ACROSS THE MAIN STREET at the rundown shops.

She turns to a small escape door. Tests the knob. But there's a COMBINATION LOCK around it.

Meddy puts the flashlight back in her mouth, pulls out a hair pin, then presses one of the prongs into the locking mechanism. She twists the numbers until...CLICK!

Meddy tries the knob again, but it still won't work. She checks the keyhole, but it's weirdly intricate like something out of PAN'S LABYRINTH.

Meddy checks both ways, then takes out a lockpick, but, when she puts it inside the keyhole, she gets a little...SHOCK!

She yanks her hand back, then turns to see Vultures perched on the roof. Their invasive eyes startle her.

An alarm BLARES!

MEDDY

Dammit.

Meddy snatches her equipment, then climbs back down her grappling hook.

EXT. LEON'S HOUSE - NIGHT

O's Beater pulls up to Leon's well-maintained, grassy yard with a single plastic, pink flamingo on the lawn.

INT. O'S BEATER - NIGHT

O puts the car in park. Jason focuses on Leon's house.

O
All I'm sayin' is, if the job ain't
cuttin' it, we got other options.

JASON
And I'm saying I'm good. Aight?

O nods. They dap up.

Jason opens the passenger door. Hops out.

EXT. LEON'S HOUSE - NIGHT

Jason saunters to the front door with the mail in one hand. He notices a Vulture above the door ledge. Shoos it away, then watches it fly off. He SIGHS, then reaches for the knob.

INT. LEON'S HOUSE - NIGHT

Jason sifts through the mail, then surveys the house.

On the island, Jason spies a newly covered tupperware of spaghetti, with a note that reads, "With extra oregano on top," attached.

He tosses the mail on the island. Grabs the spaghetti.

Jason spots Leon SNORING on the couch. Beers surround him. Jason grabs a blanket from the couch and covers him, but the remote falls from the blanket and turns the TV on.

A home movie plays.

YOUNG LEON (35) smiles brightly with a full head of thick black hair. Plays guitar for a BABY in a high chair. It flips to Theresa. Her smile could bring peace to Chiraq.

Jason watches Theresa on TV. Mesmerized, then snaps away with a grimace as he glances down to Leon.

Beside him, Jason spots the bills. He moves some of the papers around to see their due dates.

ALL OVERDUE. Payments must be made by the END OF THE WEEK.

Jason picks up the remote. Turns the TV off. Stands in the darkness by himself for a moment.

Leon chokes on a SNORE as Jason slips into...

INT. JASON'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Jason sets the pasta and his phone on his nightstand next to the empty pill bottle. The photo of Theresa gazes at Leon through the doorway.

Jason lies down on the bed. Stares at his ceiling. His eyelids...slowly..shut--

BZZZ! BZZZ! BZZZ!

Jason groggily turns to his phone. An UNKNOWN PHONE NUMBER.

BZZZ! BZZZ--

JASON

Hello?

Priscilla's sultry voice soothes like a phone sex operator.

PRISCILLA (V.O.)

Have I reached Jason Williams?

JASON

Speaking.

PRISCILLA (V.O.)

I'm Priscilla, the owner of Hair.
Just looked over your application,
and color me impressed.

Jason checks his alarm clock. It blinks, "1:27am."

JASON

Y'all are open late.

PRISCILLA (V.O.)

We squeeze every ounce of juice out
of our staff. Will an 8am, work?

JASON

Uh, I think so...

PRISCILLA (V.O.)

Great. Don't be late. Ciao.

Jason smiles, then looks at a picture of Theresa on his nightstand. Determined. Lies back down.

Behind him, a lightning strike in the rain illuminates a FIGURE spying on him in his window.

That same distant, mysterious bell DING, DING, DINGS though slightly fainter. It's emanating from OUTSIDE. After another strike hits, the figure's gone.

MORNING...

ALARM BLARES!!!

Jason snaps up.

Buckles his belt as tight as he can, but it's still loose.

Tightens a tie around his neck, horribly.

He picks his hair. Breaks the pick. Shrugs. Fuck it.

INT. KITCHEN - DAY

Jason slips by Leon as he SNORES on the couch. Just as he reaches for the door--

The wooden floor CREAKS.

Leon nearly wakes. Jason holds still for a moment until--

ZZZZ! ZZZZ!

Leon SNORES again.

Jason exhales, then leaves out the door.

INT. HAIR - DAY

Hair disorients Jason with walls cut at sharp angles. Everything is white from the walls to the chairs with black legs to the stone floor tiles. Lots of TV's.

A BRONZE BULL STATUE centerpiece demands attention. A moat-like fountain surrounds it. Water cascades from its mouth.

WOMEN (Various), white, with STRAIGHT HAIR sit at beauty stations as STYLISTS (20-40s), Men and Women, white, wash hair with THE SAUCE. They sing a show tune like "FRANK MILLS" from the play Hair. A BLACK FEATHER visible on every Stylist.

ONLY BLACK MEN are waiting. All of them with similar short crew cuts. All glued to the TVs as the commercial plays.

It enamors everyone BUT Jason.

Jason watches as, with one simple application of the miracle shampoo, their hair snaps to kinky curls EVEN WHILE WET.

He stares until a Stylist meets his gaze with an invasive glare of her own.

Jason rips his eyes away. Whistles as he spots a security camera. He takes the broken silver pick out of his pocket. Works through his afro, then gives up. It's far too tangled.

He sits back. Eyes the Bull fountain. Enthralled...but something shinier catches his eye out the storefront window.

Outside, Shoppers, all white, dressed in SPORT'S GEAR like JERSEYS of FAMOUS BLACK ATHLETES. Lebron. Mahomes. Betts.

Jason eyes the Vultures perched on Leon's shop.

JASON

Weird fucking birds.

AGATHA BLACK (25), white, the Oracle of Delphi has nothing on this woman, waltzes out. Hot. Knows it.

A BLACK FEATHER pinned in her hair behind her ear.

She raises an eyebrow. Surveys the room. Nothing but lost boys until she meets Jason's beautifully unique head of hair. Agatha ogles him up, down, left, right. Meat to her.

AGATHA

You.

JASON

Me? I just got here.

AGATHA

And now you're getting in here.
Remember how easy that was. It'll never be that easy again.

Jason hops up. Ambles past her invasive eyes.

SNIFF!! Agatha inhales a whiff of his hair as he passes.

AGATHA (CONT'D)

You smell of an Athens spring day.

JASON

Uh, it's just some shea butter.

Agatha grins slowly, sexually like Herman Cain in one of his 2012 election campaign commercials. Jason fights the desire to cringe with a pained smile.

INT. BACK ROOM - HAIR - DAY

Another white room. Agatha ushers Jason into a modernist white chair with black legs.

He faces the back of another chair. Behind the desk looms a large portrait of naked black bodies in various sexual positions. A afro-surrealist's take on the KAMA SUTRA.

Agatha passes a piece of paper to SOMEONE in the chair. An arm snatches the paper. Waves Agatha off. Agatha nods. Shoots Jason a wink on her way out the door.

AGATHA

Good luck.

Priscilla rises and sits ON the desk in front of him. A ruler in hand. Stares at his hair for an uncomfortable moment.

A BLACK FEATHER sticks out from behind her ear, as well.

JASON

Hello?

PRISCILLA

I just--Can I touch it?

Priscilla steals a pat. She quivers. Jason yanks back.

JASON

What? No--Jesus, lady!

PRISCILLA

You've just got the perfect 4d curl type. I've been looking everywhere for someone who naturally grows it.

JASON

Well, I'm right here.

PRISCILLA

You absolutely are. Honestly, your hair will fit in perfectly here.

JASON

My hair..?

PRISCILLA

You. You will fit in perfectly here.

Priscilla leans in. Reveals some cleavage.

PRISCILLA (CONT'D)
Tell me. Do you have any strengths?
(narrows her eyes)
Any deficiencies?

JASON
II-uh--deficiencies? I'm--uh--
punctual, if that's what you--

PRISCILLA
Stand up.

Jason obeys like a boot camp ensign to a drill sergeant.

PRISCILLA (CONT'D)
Turn around...Spread 'em.

JASON
What the--

PRISCILLA
Spread. Them.

Jason spreads his legs. Priscilla takes a moment to appreciate what she sees.

PRISCILLA (CONT'D)
You may have a seat.

Jason happily climbs back into his chair.

PRISCILLA (CONT'D)
You have a certain stock that rubs me well. Could be a great addition to Hair's family. Give me a moment.

Jason nods uncomfortably. Priscilla sifts through papers.

PRISCILLA (CONT'D)
Seems no one printed out your resume. It's...

JASON
Jason.

PRISCILLA
Right. Williams. Be right back.

Priscilla pops up. Giddily exits.

MOAN...

Jason surveys the room.

MOAN..

Spots a door labeled "PRIVATE" in the corner. The MOANS emanate from there.

He checks over his shoulder. The coast is clear.

Jason rises. Creeps to the door.

Closer...closer...closer...

He reaches out for the doorknob--

Priscilla snatches his wrist with surprising strength.

PRISCILLA (CONT'D)
Steady that curly head of yours.

JASON
I'm sorry. I just--uh, I'm curious.

PRISCILLA
No problem. But work hard enough,
and we'll show you how the Sauce is
made, personally.

She passes him a slip of paper.

PRISCILLA (CONT'D)
I believe you'll find this amount
to be appropriate. Paid in cash at
the end of each day. You'll start
tomorrow. 9am. Sharp. Welcome to
the team, Mr. Williams.

JASON
But I haven't--

Priscilla eyes Jason as he opens the slip. His eyes widen.

INT. UNCLE LEON'S BARBERSHOP - DAY

Through the storefront window of his empty shop, Leon watches Yates ease into Hair and hug Priscilla warmly. He raises an eyebrow, then--

Jason slips out from Hair, then slinks down the sidewalk.
Bumps between Shoppers.

Leon's appalled. Seethes. Closes the blinds.

O (PRE-LAP)
DAAAAA--

INT. LEON'S HOUSE - NIGHT

O's off his rocker excited. Paces in front of the Leon's TV with the slip of paper in his hands.

Jason glances at a picture of Theresa on the wall. She's not so impressed. Frowns. Jason rolls his eyes. He's pumped, too.

O
--AAAAAMMMMN!!!

JASON
Right?

O laughs at Jason.

JASON (CONT'D)
What?

O
It's nothing.

JASON
No, what is it?

O
It's just--This is the most excited
I seen you in a while. You could
throw the leftover Leon's way too.

Jason stops. Thinks about it. Laughs off the pointed comment.

JASON
Fuck outta here with that soft
shit, man. I just need my pills,
but...

Jason fishes in his pocket. Pulls out a joint.

JASON (CONT'D)
...Celebratory pre-roll?

O
Say less--

Keys JIGGLE in the door. Startled, Jason and O jump. The joint flies in the air. It falls between the couch cushions.

O (CONT'D)
Fuck! The pre-roll!

Leon trudges inside the house with grocery bags in his hands. Perks up at the sight of Jason and O. Sniffs the air.

LEON

So this is what y'all do when I'm
not around, huh?

O

What's good, Mr. Williams?

LEON

Not much. Including you, boy. Out.

JASON

Hold up--

LEON

Nuh-uh-uh. I may be older but I
know grade-A stank when I smell it.
Ain't nobody cheefin' in my house.

O

Sounds like a boring house--

LEON

Go home, O!

O reads the room. Nothing good here. He daps Jason. Exits.
Jason eases over. Grabs the lock.

LEON (CONT'D)

And before you lock it up, grab the
mail. My hands were too full.

Jason SIGHS. Tightens his jaw. Opens the door.

EXT. LEON'S HOUSE - NIGHT

Jason opens the mailbox. Sifts through it. An unaddressed
letter sticks out.

It's "To Jason Williams, from a friend."

Jason scrutinizes the envelope.

JASON

Hmm.

Jason's stomach GRUMBLES. He looks through a window into the
kitchen. Leon's already hard at work over the stove.

INT. KITCHEN - NIGHT

A bucket of CRABS HISS as water boils them alive. One almost
escapes before another pulls it back down into the cesspool.

The door CREAKS open as Leon stirs them into oblivion. Jason quietly shuts the door. Tries to sneak to the fridge--

LEON
Love me some crab.

Jason deflates. Caught.

LEON (CONT'D)
Y'know, I use crab in my meatballs?

JASON
No, can I get a--

LEON
Funny thing 'bout crabs, though.

JASON
Leon, would you just let me--

Leon SMACKS a firm hand on the counter. Jason freezes.

LEON
Scientists say they feel pain. That hiss ya hear. It's them screamin'.

Leon stirs loosely once more, as the HISS GROWS.

LEON (CONT'D)
That's not the funny part though.
When they're gettin' boiled, and what not, they try to escape. When one of 'em is about to get free, the rest of 'em try to latch onto him. Use him, ya know? But that extra weight drags the poor fella back into the water with 'em.

He stops stirring. Glances up at the backsplash

LEON (CONT'D)
They kill each other. Call it the "crabs in a barrel" effect.

Leon dries his hands. Grabs two plates. Offers one.

LEON (CONT'D)
Want a plate?

JASON
Nah, I'm good. Lost my appetite.

Jason turns. Ambles to his room. Leon snatches his shoulder.

LEON

I seen you over at Hair.

JASON

You told me to--

LEON

But there of all places?

JASON

We don't exactly have options in
this bust town. I need the bread.

LEON

But your mama wouldn't want you
gettin' it workin for them.

JASON

You know what else she wouldn't
want? You running her shop into the
fucking ground, but we don't get
everything we want, do we? So stop
concerning yourself about where my
paper comes from.

Leon grits his teeth. Jason nods, then slips into...

INT. JASON'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Jason drags inside, drops his backpack onto the floor, tosses his shirt into the pile, then hops on his bed as something Black as fuck like "BLACK DYNAMITE" plays on his TV.

He studies the envelope, then rolls onto his stomach. Glances at the picture of Theresa as she nods, reassuringly.

He rips the envelope open, unfurls the letter. On it:

"Suffer for a day; earn a lifetime of bliss. - The Bandit."

JASON

What the fuck?

Jason glances at Theresa. She shrugs. Doesn't know. He settles on his back with the letter on his chest.

He drifts to sleep as...

BANG!

A gunshot fires on TV.

GLASS CRACKLE!

INT. THERESA'S CAR - NIGHT (FLASHBACK)

YOUNGER JASON (17) climbs into the TAN LEATHER driver's seat from the passenger's side. Places his phone on the dashboard. Poses for a photo.

Jason grabs the phone. Giddily looks at the photo, until-- Theresa's BLOODY face SLAMS into the window from the outside. Right as Jason HOLLERS IN TERROR--

INT. JASON'S BEDROOM - DAY

Jason snaps up in a cold sweat. Pants heavily. He glances to Theresa's photo. She taps her wrist. Jason checks his clock.

8:45am. Fuck.

Jason hops up. Throws some clothes on. Races out the door.

EXT. DOWNTOWN COOLCHITOWN - DAY

Jason spots a massive crowd of Shoppers around Hair.

They're all dressed in streetwear like WIFE BEATERS, DURAGS, and CHAINS. They climb over each other to get inside Hair. IT'S ALREADY OPEN. He races over.

INT. HAIR - DAY

Stylists sing a show tune such as "GOOD MORNING STARSHINE" from the play Hair in unison as they cut and style. Each chair is at a different stage of the process. Some shampoo, some color, others cut.

The place is busting at the seams.

Shoppers stare at the TVs as the suggestive commercial for the Sauce plays on repeat.

Priscilla rings up a WOMAN (40s), white, with EXTREMELY CURLY HAIR at the counter. Bags a purple bottle of the Sauce, then passes it to the satisfied customer.

PRISCILLA

Thank you, come again!

Jason slips in as the Woman walks out. He notices that she's hand-in-hand with a BLACK CHILD (8), but when he turns--

A Stylist is in his face. He jumps back in shock.

STYLIST #1
Oh my god! Is that him?

STYLIST #2
He's adorable!

The Stylists drop their implements. Bum-rush Jason. His eyes widen. They shower him in uncomfortable hugs and kisses. Way too comfortable and touchy-feely.

Priscilla cuts through the wave of Stylists.

PRISCILLA
Stylists, please! There will be
plenty of him to go around. Back to
your stations.

The Stylists snap to. Obedience.

Priscilla helps Jason up. Lipstick covers him. Somewhat flattened afro. Broken glasses. Priscilla checks her watch.

PRISCILLA (CONT'D)
9:01. You're late, pretty boy.

JASON
My bad. Got sidetracked.

PRISCILLA
That was my first head of the day.
(shows Jason a picture)
Before...

Priscilla points at the Woman. Jason notices her curly hair. Compares it to the straight hair in the photo.

She parades her Child in front of other Shoppers, then yanks the Child away with excessive force when they lose interest.

JASON
(hates the whole scene)
It's...nice.

PRISCILLA
And you say all the right things.
(turns a 180)
Follow me.

Jason hurries behind her.

INT. BACK ROOM - DAY

Priscilla waltzes inside, turns on a dime, and stares at Jason's worn dickies. Scrutinizes them for a looooooong time.

Jason surveys the room.

The surreal Kama Sutra has been replaced by a cubist-style take on "THE OLD PLANTATION."

Priscilla circles him. Picks at his clothes.

PRISCILLA
These look thuggish.
(snap, snap)
Dress him properly.

Agatha and THEA BLACK (22), imagine Aphrodite in an emo phase with GREEN lipstick, damn near teleport to Priscilla's side.

A BLACK FEATHER is pinned in Thea's hair, like her sisters.

Agatha swipes Jason's shoulders. Jason ZOOMS into...

INT. HAIR - DAY

AT AGATHA'S BEAUTY STATION

It looks like a bloodbath. Red hair dye blankets her sink. She spins him around to face the mirror.

AGATHA
I'll show you what makes the Sauce
so special.

Thea passes a purple bottle of the Sauce to Agatha.

JASON
Special? Like Mane 'n Tail?

AGATHA
Mane 'n Tail? Did you hear him,
sister? The Sauce is so much better
than Mane 'n stinking tail! It's
magic! It keeps our skin so--

THEA
Why don't you get to the showing
part of orientation, sister?

AGATHA
Right, right. Got a little carried
away there.

THEA
You tend to--

AGATHA
Shut up, hag.

Agatha smiles, then squirts the entire bottle on Jason's afro. Not enough. She grabs another. Agatha massages it in as pleasurable MOANS escape her mouth. Jason cringes. He wants no part in this sexual haircut.

Agatha dips Jason into the sink to rinse. Brings him up. Dips again. Again. Jason chokes on soapy water.

Thea wraps his head in a towel. Dries him off. Rotates the chair around for Jason to face the mirror.

Agatha yanks the towel off. His hair has not changed at all.

AGATHA (CONT'D)
Voidaaaaahhhhhh!

Jason cringes at Agatha in the mirror. She really thinks she did something here, but she clearly has not.

AGATHA (CONT'D)
You like?

JASON
(unsure how to respond)
It's...great.

AGATHA
Chevere!

Thea swipes Jason's shoulders. He zooms into...

INT. BACK ROOM - DAY

Thea runs a measuring tape across Jason's arms, legs, and body as Agatha digs through a closet. Jason's not at all happy with the attention. Priscilla sits at her desk.

THEA
He's a medium.

JASON
Stop touching me--

PRISCILLA
Nonsense. If you want to be a part of Hair's success, you need to look the part and we need measurements.

Agatha grabs a pair of sleek BALMAIN jeans and a WHITE tee.

AGATHA
Perfect.

She throws them to Thea. Thea shoves them into Jason's hands.

PRISCILLA
Strip.

JASON
Are you insane?

PRISCILLA
Oh, right. Right. Right.
(to her Sisters)
Girls, if you will.

Agatha and Thea head for the door. Thea mopes, and Agatha seductively blows a kiss. They shut the door behind them.

Priscilla rises. Heads back to her desk.

PRISCILLA (CONT'D)
I've got better things to look for.

She bends down and rifles through it. Behind her, Jason changes. He notices a LARGE SAFE in the desk's lower cabinet. Priscilla rises between Jason's gaze and the safe and scrunches her eyebrows. She barely missed Jason's sneak peek.

PRISCILLA (CONT'D)
You have work to do.

She hands him a tiny broom and a broken metal dustpan.

JASON
I can't possibly clean with these--

PRISCILLA
I expect you to.

Tosses him a pair of WIERD KEYS. Jason scrutinizes them.

PRISCILLA (CONT'D)
The keys to the shop.
(clap, claps)
Now, if you need me, don't hesitate
to shout...
(pinches his cheek)
...my little janitor.

With that, Priscilla slips behind the "Private" door. She gives Jason a snide smirk. CLINK! The door closes and locks.

Jason exhales. He studies the keys, then glances up to the ceiling like it's heaven.

JASON
You better be right about this one
day of suffering shit.
(glances back down)
Cuz my psyche won't do two.

He forces a CHESHIRE GRIN. Eases out.

INT. HAIR - DAY

Jason shuts the door, then turns to the Stylists...

...but they're ALL STARING AT HIM. Frozen in time. All of the Women are getting the SAME KINKY CURLY HAIRCUT. Then back to business as usual. Chopping, dying, styling.

Jason's eyes stop on a disheveled BLACK WOMAN (30s) as she eases into the shop. Looks around for an empty chair. The Stylists admonish her Nubian braids.

BLACK WOMAN
Y'all do braids 'round here?

AGATHA
No, I'm so sorry. You should leave.

BLACK WOMAN
But my edges--

AGATHA
We don't work with...edges...here.

BLACK WOMAN
Well, you got any recommendations?
Cuz y'all are poppin'.

AGATHA
For someone like you, no. Bye now.

BLACK WOMAN
What you mean, "someone like me?"

Agatha pushes the Black Woman out of the shop.

BLACK WOMAN (CONT'D)
Hey, I'm talkin' a you--You see
this? You see what they doin' to
sistahs 'round here--

Agatha slams the door shut. Cleans her hands.

AGATHA
Good riddance.

Jason stares at Agatha. Nothing about that was okay to him. Agatha cradles his chin with her hand.

AGATHA (CONT'D)
Don't worry. I'd never do that to you. Your mother raised you right. Unlike that rabble, you're one of the good ones.

Agatha gives a dark smile, then taps his nose playfully.

AGATHA (CONT'D)
Such a beautiful big nose. Boop.

She leaves him be, and heads back to her station. Jason gulps, then sweeps up hair around the Stylists' feet.

INT. UNCLE LEON'S BARBERSHOP - DAY

Leon watches the ruckus at Hair from his chair. A tupperware of spaghetti and meatballs in his lap and fork in his mouth. Spots Jason through the Hair storefront window.

Jason smiles brightly as he works hard inside. Leon simmers.

INT. HAIR - DAY

Jason's forced smile fades into a stressful grimace as he struggles to keep up with the Stylists. They're machines. Jason rubs sweat from...

LATER...

...his brow.

Jason sweeps vigorously. Fast...faster...fastest--

Cuts his hand on the dented dustpan.

JASON
Shit!

He said that too loud. Looks around as he sucks on the cut. The "Private" door opens for a split second as a black trash bag PLOPS down outside of it.

Jason SIGHS.

EXT. ALLEYWAY - NIGHT

The Vultures watch Jason's every step through the alley. Jason slings the trash bag over his shoulder. It's filled to the brim. Gauze on his hand.

LARGE GREEN METAL DUMPSTERS are ahead of him.

MOAN...

He stops. Looks around for the sound. Shrugs. Continues. Jason tosses the bag inside a dumpster, but it RIPS open.

LOTS OF BLOOD-COVERED TOWELS.

He lifts one from the ground. Smells it.

JASON

That's not hair dye.

MOAN...

Jason whips his head around. The MOANS escape from below. He peers through an open window and sees Priscilla's office. Spots the "Private" door slightly ajar.

BZZZZ!

Jason jumps. Surprised by his phone.

He checks it...as--

A hand SNATCHES his shoulder.

Jason flinches. Drops his phone.

JASON (CONT'D)

Shit!

PRISCILLA

Didn't mean to scare you. Just wanted to congratulate you on a job well done. You may last a long time here with us if you can perform like that regularly.

JASON

Thanks. Do you want the keys back?

PRISCILLA

Hold onto them. For tomorrow.

She pulls out some cash. Sifts through it.

PRISCILLA (CONT'D)
Here's today's pay.

Jason counts it. Furrows his brow.

JASON
This is only half.

PRISCILLA
Irresponsibility has its
consequences.

Priscilla eases away, but Jason rushes after her.

JASON
No, we agreed--

PRISCILLA
You broke that agreement by being
late this morning.

JASON
I worked hard for that money. I
earned it.

PRISCILLA
You earn what I say you earn. Today
you were late, so you earned less.

Priscilla chuckles, then presses toward him.

PRISCILLA (CONT'D)
Don't be late tomorrow, or you
won't be earning much here any
longer. Are we clear?

Jason nods as Priscilla raises her chin to him.

PRISCILLA (CONT'D)
Good.

Priscilla leaves Jason in the alleyway alone.

PRISCILLA (CONT'D)
Have a good night, Mr. Williams.

He goes back to grab his phone, but a Vultures pecks at the screen and SQUAWKS at him.

JASON
That's my phone, you fucking bird!

Jason tries to shoo it away but it stands its ground, so he rears back and--

CRUNCH!

He kicks the bird into the brick wall of the alleyway breaking its neck.

Jason snatches his phone, then turns to the twitching Vulture. He peeks into the basement window again. The door is no longer ajar, but he spots the shelf and large safe.

He pulls out his cellphone. Dials.

JASON (CONT'D)
Yeah. It's me. We need to talk
about those other options. Now.

EXT. THE ARGYLE LOUNGE - NIGHT

A neon-lined monolith to underground excess. It lords over the surrounding shacks, bandos, and bodegas and commands attention like a stripper on the main stage.

O's beater pulls into the fenced-in, sparsely parked lot.

This place looks like it's preparing for war...

INT. O'S BEATER - NIGHT

O hogs the rearview mirror. Combs his hair. Rubs his brows. Through the windshield, the neon visage of THE ARGYLE pulsates from the low, thumpy BASS PUMPING within.

Jason's tense. Through the window, he surveys the outside.

It's a sketchy part of town. If you thought downtown was rundown, this place is rubble piled on top of rubble.

Jason checks his watch. That same blinking "1:27."

JASON
I think my watch is broken.

O
Just one more second, my G. Gotta
look good for the boss lady.

JASON
It's always a girl with you.

O
And it's never with you, Mr. I-
can't-get-hard-cuz-of-my-depression
ass nigga?

O glares at the plastic bag by Jason's hip.

O (CONT'D)
I know dick meds when I see them.
(primping in the mirror)
My gran gran's shit ain't work
right, since 'Nam.

Jason GROANS. Swings the door open. Leaves the bag behind.

O (CONT'D)
When we're in there, just follow
me. I'll do the--

O breaks his trance with the mirror. Searches for Jason. O spots Jason on his way toward the Argyle without him.

O (CONT'D)
Damn it.

O gives one last look to the mirror, then runs out after him.

EXT. THE ARGYLE LOUNGE - NIGHT

Jason marches from O's Beater as O haphazardly gives chase. Grabs Jason's wrist.

O
Fade back, Knievil. Rush in any
faster, and people might think the
British are coming.

JASON
Good. Because the British are
already here. No--

Jason and O walk into a burly-chested BOUNCER (30s), black.

JASON (CONT'D)
Watch where you're...go...ing...

BOUNCER
Let's see some IDs.

Jason passes his. The Bouncer scrutinizes it.

JASON
Oh...well...we're just here for
the...uh...

BOUNCER

This ain't the place for you, kid.
(gives the ID back)
Take a hike.

JASON

What? I'm twenty-two. Bruh, let me--

Jason tries to force his way past the Bouncer, but the Bouncer isn't having it.

BOUNCER

Uh-uh. You don't have the, uh...
Argyle look.
(eyes Jason's clothes)
We're an...oxford and jeans kinda
joint if you catch my drift.

Jason surveys the dilapidated surroundings. The Bouncer is clearly lying to him. O eases by Jason.

O

What's good wit it, big homie?

O daps up the Bouncer with a complex handshake that ends with a forearm embrace.

A *SECRET HANDSHAKE*.

The Bouncer scans them. Particularly Jason. O glances from Jason to the Bouncer. The Bouncer nods. He opens the door.

Jason's baffled.

O (CONT'D)

What did we learn?

JASON

You'll do the talking.

O

Damn right.

O tips the Bouncer a five as they ease past.

INT. THE ARGYLE LOUNGE - NIGHT

There's a bar at the center of the room. Around it small tables of mostly BLACK CLUBGOERS (21+) group up and share Hookah. Some dance as a small JAZZ BAND plays on the stage.

O races past that straight toward the bar, but Jason surveys the entire space. Awestruck.

JASON
This place it's...so...

O
You gotta see this side of town
more, man.

AT THE BAR

O waits as the BARTENDER (30s), black, cleans a glass.
Jason spots some WOMEN on the dance floor. O chuckles.

O (CONT'D)
Take a chill pill. We're here on
business...this time.

The Bartender wades over. Eyes them up and down.

BARTENDER
What do you want, kid?

O
We need to talk to the boss lady.

The Bartender narrows his eyes. That's a no-go.

O (CONT'D)
You know, the HNIC?

Still a no-go. Jason leans in WHISPERS.

JASON
The White Flight Bandit.

RECORD SCRATCH.

Everyone and everything stops. Everyone stares at him. The attention makes him uncomfortable.

O
It's okay, y'all, I got him.

O punches Jason's shoulder.

O (CONT'D)
Don't say that 'round here. She
don't like it. Nobody does.

MEDDY (O.S.)
No, I don't. Especially from an
unfamiliar voice.

Meddy slips in from behind a curtain with Alexandre Dumas' *THE COUNT OF MONTE CRISTO* in her hand. She stops in shock at the sight of Jason. Then smiles.

MEDDY (CONT'D)
Or maybe a familiar one.

Jason stiffens. Feeling isn't mutual. He glares at Meddy.

JASON
Nah, unfamiliar.

Meddy lets out a faint scoff as CLUBGOER #1 approaches Jason with a hand on his belt.

CLUBGOER #1
One word and my guys will waste
this Cinna-Mon-lookin' ass nigga.

JASON
Yeah, I get that a lot. Baby face.

Clubgoer #1 narrows his eyes. Cocks his DESERT EAGLE. Jason grins as Clubgoer #1 sizes him up, but Meddy cuts in.

MEDDY
I can take it from here.

Clubgoer #1 nods at Meddy while he glares at Jason, then backs down. The JAZZ resumes as Meddy smiles at Jason.

JASON (PRE-LAP)
You shouldn't have come back.

INT. BACK ROOM - THE ARGYLE LOUNGE - NIGHT

As the place clears out, Meddy eases into a booth.

MEDDY
Well, I did.
(recomposes)
But enough about spilt milk. Sit.

Jason and O sit across from Meddy. The Bartender brings them water and two shots of tequila. Meddy doesn't take her water, but the Bartender sets a glass before Jason and O.

Jason goes for his, but O cuts him off. Tosses the shot back.

JASON
I ordered that!

O quickly chases it with the second shot, then burps.

O
What? I was thirsty!

Meddy covers her mouth to hide a laugh, but as she reaches up she knocks her purse open just enough for Jason to sneak a peek at an exposed syringe inside.

JASON
So you steal for these guys and they give you dope? Convenient.

MEDDY
It's not like that.

O
Little harsh, dog.

JASON
I must have developed Alzheimer's cause I don't remember asking you a question, bro.

MEDDY
You get my letter?
(collects herself)
Your Mom kept the peace in this hood. The day she died--

JASON
Don't ever twist my Mom's words like that again.

MEDDY
I was trying to apologize.

JASON
Apologize? Is that what this savior complex is for, college girl? The hood isn't your project to just come back to and protect like you never left it. The place lives, loves, mourns without you.
(rises)
Let's go.

MEDDY
Then why don't you?

Jason stops. Thinks.

MEDDY (CONT'D)
I heard about Theresa's.

JASON
It's Uncle Leon's now.

MEDDY
Heard about that too. I also heard
you got a job at Hair. How is it?

Jason glares at O. O puts his hands up. Surrenders.

MEDDY (CONT'D)
Don't blame him. I've been casing
the place for a couple days, now.

JASON
That explains a lot.

Jason SIGHS. Relents a bit.

JASON (CONT'D)
They pay well, but the owner thinks
she can treat me any way she wants.
Reminds me of you.

Meddy glances at the ground. Ashamed.

MEDDY
So you came here for my help.

JASON
I came here for the Bandit's help.
They've got a safe, and I need cash
for some...pills.

O
They're his dick pills.

JASON
What the fuck, O?!

O
What?

MEDDY
And you call me the dope fiend.

JASON
Don't get it twisted. My shit's
prescribed. You're self-medicating.

MEDDY
You were always a blunt instrument,
but it doesn't matter. The place is
locked down tighter than Fort Knox.

JASON
Don't worry about that.

Meddy thinks. Long and hard. Then relaxes. He's won her over.

MEDDY
Fine. I'll get my gear.

O smiles at Jason as Meddy slips out the curtain past him. The Bartender narrows his eyes, then grabs their glasses.

EXT. HAIR - NIGHT

O parks his beater out front of Hair on the street. Jason and Meddy slip out of the car. All are clad in BLACK. Meddy heads for the trunk, while Jason eases to Hair's door. O pops the trunk open, then slides out.

O
So what's the plan, boss?

Meddy scours the trunk. Inside, a cat burglar's paradise. There's rope and chain, a grappling hook, flashlights, etc.

MEDDY
Simple. Every shop on the street has a key-lock on the roof because the county doesn't bother to update them, so we'll toss the grappling hook and climb to the roof.

O's excited.

MEDDY (CONT'D)
But Hair's key lock is insanely intricate, so I'm hoping I can crack it with--

Jason opens the front door with his keys.

JASON
Or, I can just open the front door.

He looks back at them. JINGLES the keys. O and Meddy look at him, then to each other, then back again.

MEDDY
That works, too. O
Yeah, sure.

Meddy grabs her backpack and three flashlights, then shuts the trunk. LEAVES THE REST OF HER GEAR INSIDE.

INT. HAIR - NIGHT

Jason hits the lights. Everyone GASPS at the sheer weird beauty of the white vaulted walls and BRONZE BULL.

O
Whoa.

JASON
This is the place.

Meddy inspects the supplies at one of the stations. Surveys the room. Spots the red light of a security camera.

JASON (CONT'D)
Just please be careful not to--

CRASHHHH!

Jason stares at O as he labors over a fallen glass of barbicide.

JASON (CONT'D)
Break anything.

O
Sorry.

Jason lets out a frustrated SIGH. Meddy climbs on a station.

JASON
What the Hell are you doing!?!?

Meddy takes out a small pair of scissors. Reaches behind the camera with them.

MEDDY
Almost got it.

She feels around until--CLICK!

MEDDY (CONT'D)
There!

The red light fades to black. It's dead.

MEDDY (CONT'D)
Now, we've got free reign.
(to Jason)
Where's the safe?

JASON
In the back.

MEDDY

I'll go work on it while you two
loot the register.

JASON

Sounds good. The back room is that
way. Just follow the hallway.

Meddy nods, then turns on her flashlight as she eases down
the dark hallway.

O pilfers every drawer he can find. Nothing's safe. Jason
hits the register. He's disappointed to find it empty. SLAMS
it shut.

INT. BACK ROOM - NIGHT

"THE SCREAM" with four different, brightly colored vignettes
reminiscent of Andy Warhol replaces "The Old Plantation."

Meddy scours the office. Combs through Priscilla's desk. She
opens a lower cabinet on the shelf and...

MEDDY

Bingo!

The large safe hides inside.

She puts the flashlight in her mouth, swings her backpack
around, and opens it. Inside, a safe-cracking kit. She pulls
a lock pick out. Manipulates the locking mechanism.

She feels around for a bit, then--

CRACK!

The safe's door pops open.

Meddy smirks...until she sees what's inside.

INT. HAIR - NIGHT

O packs a small duffel bag with the little cash he can find,
while Jason scrubs up the barbicide. Jason wipes his face.

JASON

That should be enough for the shop.

O

Fuck outta here with that, bro. I'm
getting what's owed.

JASON
I'm not trying--

O
Look, man, with all due respect,
this ain't just about you no more.
I'm getting enough for everybody to
keep eating. We got a whole street
with signs up.

Jason thinks, then glances through the storefront window out
at a single SHOPPER dressed in PLANTATION ERA garb, across
the street, in the shadows.

JASON
(am I really seeing this)
What the fuck--

MEDDY (O.S.)
Jason!

JASON
What?

MEDDY (O.S.)
You and O need to see this.

Jason and O look at each other. Concerned.

INT. BACK ROOM - NIGHT

Meddy hunches over the desk. On it, three passports and lots
of cash.

Jason and O run inside. When Jason sees the pile of money, he
stops in his tracks. O's jaw nearly drops off the hinges.

O
Knew this place was loaded! Good
shit, boss!

Meddy doesn't share O's excitement.

O (CONT'D)
What's wrong?

MEDDY
This place is just a salon, right?

JASON
Yeah, and?

MEDDY

What would a salon need a hundred thousand dollars in cash for? It's not adding up.

JASON

Are those passports?

Jason slides over opens one to look at the picture inside. It's Priscilla. But her name's different here.

PEISINOE.

JASON (CONT'D)

Well that explains the Bull.
They're from Greece.

MEDDY

But what about the cash?

O

Who the fuck cares. Just grab as much as you can carry and let's go.

O makes a move toward the pile--

A LOUD MOAN...

They crane their heads toward the "Private" door.

MEDDY

Y'all hear that?

O

It's coming from the door.

A LOUDER MOAN...

MEDDY

Jason is that normal?

JASON

It's never been this loud before.

O

What's in there?

JASON

I'm not exactly sure. I think it's their secret ingredient, but they don't let me go back there.

O
That's boss code for the best
shit's this way. Open it up.

AN EVEN LOUDER MOAN...

O pushes Jason toward the door.

Jason hesitates. Glances back.

Meddy's unsure. Shrugs.

Jason gulps...

...then twiddles the keys in his hands.

MOANS grow more energetic, faster as Jason inches over.

MOAN...MOAN...MOAN...

The knob quakes until Jason's steady hand stills it. He puts the key in the knob. Slowly twists.

CREAK.....

AGATHA (V.O.)
Your mother raised you right.

Jason takes one last look at O and Meddy. Both nod.

AGATHA (V.O.)
You're one of the good ones.

He turns back to the door.

CLICK!

It opens, and he steps into...

INT. PRIVATE ROOM - NIGHT

Shock blankets everyone's face.

Jason claws at his hair as the MOANING grows.

SERIES OF SHOTS - WHAT THE HELL IS IN HERE?

A) BLACK and WHITE feet stumble around under hazy lights.

MEDDY
What...?

B) Faces of pleasure.

O
The...?

C) Black and white bodies writhe and grind on each other.

JASON
Fuck!

Priscilla, wearing an ALL WHITE Doctor's coat, eases around the orgy, with a metal table. Sharp implements on top of it.

She wears a MEDIEVAL BLACK PLAGUE DOCTOR'S MASK.

Jason recognizes the orgy's participants.

They're the MISSING BLACK MEN from the posters.

PRISCILLA
Oh, good, you brought friends, too.

Priscilla lifts a SERVANT'S BELL and that same DING. DING. DING RINGS out...but it's no longer faint.

Within a split second, Al leaps out of the orgy. Drags Jason inside with a RECOGNIZABLE WRINKLED HAND. Two other Black Men snatch Meddy and O.

The Three kick and scream to no avail.

The door SLAMS behind them.

SMASH TO BLACK.

Priscilla CACKLES over the darkness.

FADE IN:

INT. JASON'S ROOM - ANTHEMOS SPA - DAY

Jason lies peacefully on a thick king-sized mattress in the middle of a mahogany furnished room with white walls.

A STUFFED TAXIDERMY SNOW CRAB is mounted to the wall above his headboard.

A white ceiling fan rotates slowly above the bed reminiscent of APOCALYPSE NOW.

Jason's eyes snap open. He flails to life.

...then Jason GROANS. He has a splitting headache.

JASON
What the hell is going on?

Jason, in a puffy white robe, struggles to raise his body from the thick mattress.

Calm ELEVATOR MUSIC accents the Spa.

He glances to a sign above his door that reads, "Participate to earn more days in the spa. - Management"

JASON (CONT'D)
Participate?

Jason turns to an analog clock.

13:27pm.

A small RINGING fills his ears as he works through his confusion. Jason runs his hands through his hair.

The RINGING grows until--

O BURSTS through the door.

O
Finally. Get up! Need ya at the top
of your game.

Jason rises, then holds his head. Collapses back to the bed.

JASON
I can barely stand.

O offers Jason a MURKY WHITE LIQUID COCKTAIL in a paper cup.

O
Drink this. It helps.

Jason eyes O, who wears a toothy smile, then takes the cup.

He shrugs, then throws the drink back in one gulp.

JASON
Tangy.

O
You'll feel better in a second.

Jason's pupils dilate and grow in size, then shrink back to normal. His neck and head convulse just a bit.

JASON
Whoa.

O rises. Gives him a helping hand.

O
Right? Now get up. We got bread to
chase and chicks to mingle with.

JASON
Where's Meddy?

O
Forget about her, bruh. Plenty of
women around here for us both.

JASON
I've never seen this place before.

O
Maybe a tour will remind ya.

Jason nods. Then walks toward the door.

O wags a finger.

O (CONT'D)
Nuh, uh, uh. Not without the slips.

Jason follows O's finger as he points to a pair of WHITE BUNNY slippers by Jason's bed.

O (CONT'D)
They get mad if you don't wear 'em.

JASON
Who gets mad?

PRISCILLA (O.S.)
We do.

Priscilla's silhouette looms in the doorway. She steps forward into the light. Reveals a big smile.

She's dressed in a sort of sexy headmaster's outfit taken straight from the 90s porno mag Jason drooled on. Ruler in hand. She's perky and jubilant in demeanor.

Since when did Priscilla start smiling? At Jason?

PRISCILLA (CONT'D)
And we just wanna make you happy
and comfortable here at Anthemos.

Jason ogles her. He can't quite place her. It's like part of his memory is missing. O drools a bit.

PRISCILLA (CONT'D)
Preparing for a tour?

O
Yes, we are, Mrs. Priscilla.

PRISCILLA
Mind if I tag along? Give my two cents.

Priscilla scrutinizes Jason. Studying him as he studies her.

O
Nobody likes a sausage-fest anyway.

PRISCILLA
You'll both find that we're no strangers to sausage around here.

Priscilla holds the door open. Pushes the Boys into...

INT. LONG WOODED HALLWAY - ANTHEMOS SPA - DAY

As Jason leaves, he notices a BLANK PICTURE FRAME outside his door. Next door, there's another.

O
That's my room.

Jason nods, as they ease down the hallway and pass by MUGSHOT-ESQUE PICTURES OF THE MISSING BLACK MEN on the doors. All sport huge CHESHIRE GRINS.

Jason and O follow as Priscilla ushers them along.

PRISCILLA
Here at Anthemos, pleasure is our only concern. Your pleasure. No matter what that may be. Each room allows for a different experience. Whether it's physical...

Priscilla opens Al's door. Jason and O peek inside.

INT. AL'S ROOM - ANTHEMOS SPA - DAY

Al and another Missing Black Man have very rough and brutal sex with Agatha.

Through the pleasure, Agatha winks at Jason.

A MOUNTED DOG'S HEAD is perched above the bed's headboard.

INT. LONG WOODED HALLWAY - DAY

Jason cringes while O's smile grows.

Priscilla shuts the door.

PRISCILLA
...mental...

Priscilla opens another door to a Missing Black Man's room.

INT. MISSING BLACK MAN'S ROOM - ANTHEMOS SPA - DAY

A Stylist in black leather brandishes a whip in her hand while another Missing Black Man is handcuffed to the bed and gagged, She raises the whip.

His eyes widen in terror. His MUFFLED SCREAMS. Genuine.

INT. LONG WOODED HALLWAY - DAY

Priscilla closes the door gently.

Jason's brow tenses a bit. Worry. Fear.

PRISCILLA
...or fantasy...

Muffled ROCK MUSIC emanates from behind the door.

Jason reaches for the knob, but Priscilla stops him.

She clears her throat. Forces a smile at the two of them.

PRISCILLA (CONT'D)
As much as like a man eager to
please, this room is invite only.

O
You a dog, my nigga.

PRISCILLA
You'll get your invitation in time,
but first, we need to know more
about you and your fancy.

JASON
How will we know?

PRISCILLA
You'll feel it. Like a sudden
uncontrollable urge.

JASON
And, if not?

Priscilla nods, then glances at Jason. O nudges his arm. Jason holds a straight face. Locks eyes with Priscilla.

PRISCILLA
Feel free to explore.
(serious)
In fact, it's required of you.
(playful again)
You, both, do want your stay to be
comfortable here, right?

Priscilla slaps her hand with the ruler.

O gulps, then nods. Jason glares at her. Unconvinced. Priscilla breaks into a smile.

PRISCILLA (CONT'D)
O, do you mind showing Jason to the
Mess Hall?

O runs ahead of Jason. He turns back.

Jason finally breaks free from Priscilla's sanguine smile. He spots that same unnaturally huge smile on O's face, too.

Jason turns to the last door again. Contemplates it.

Almost remembers something.

Jason lets it go. He takes off after O.

As they round the corner, Priscilla's smile drops to a scowl.

She passes through the last door into...

MATCH CUT TO:

INT. BACK ROOM - NIGHT

Priscilla closes the "Private" door. Sports the white coat.

Thea moves arrhythmically to the tune while she places medical implements on a metal table beside an unconscious Meddy, who is strapped to a second table.

PRISCILLA
Turn that shit down.

Thea lowers her radio.

THEA

Sorry.

PRISCILLA

The boys seem to be settling in
nicely with the rest.

THEA

That's good.

Priscilla ambles past Thea to a bound, gagged Meddy.

Thea peeks over.

PRISCILLA

What of this one?

THEA

She's not taking too well to the
DMT, but I found these.

Thea shows Meddy's track marks. Priscilla's eyes narrow.

Priscilla rifles through Meddy's things. Finds the syringe
and a small bottle. She reads it.

"Dimethyltryptamine for Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder."

PRISCILLA

Poor girl micro-doses for PTSD.

(to Thea)

Double her dose.

THEA

That could kill her.

PRISCILLA

Do you want to me to send you in
there to give the animals free
blowies and handies?

Thea shakes her head "no."

Agatha eases through the "Private" door with a sensual grin.

PRISCILLA (CONT'D)

You almost look like you enjoy it.

AGATHA

Who doesn't like giving a hand job?

She flicks a plastic glove into the trash.

THEA
Everyone. Literally everyone.

AGATHA
It's sarcasm, Bitchy Mc-Cunt-Pants.
Those drugged up mules can't tell
the difference between my hand and
literally any other hole, anyway.

Meddy wakes violently. Wrestles with her restraints, breathes heavily through a gag.

The Sisters loom tall over Meddy as her head darts from Sister to Sister to Sister.

PRISCILLA
Get me a syringe.

Thea eyes her. Priscilla meets her gaze exasperated.

PRISCILLA (CONT'D)
Ugh. Fine. Get the chloroform. But
I swear to Zeus, if this doesn't
shut her up, you're going in there
next, Thea.

Thea runs over to the metal tray. Grabs chloroform and a rag.
Passes them to Priscilla.

Meddy's eyes widen.

PRISCILLA (CONT'D)
Hold her down.

The tune rises.

Meddy yanks the restraints. Fights for her life.

PRISCILLA (CONT'D)
Still fighting to live in a world
that steals from you.

Priscilla pours some of the chloroform on the rag.

PRISCILLA (CONT'D)
That's the crisis of this society.
Everyone wants magic they can't
possess. They'll kill for it.

Meddy leers at Thea. Thea smirks.

Priscilla glances at the colorful rendition of "The Scream."
Waves her hand.

The portrait morphs before Meddy's eyes into a painted rendition of "ODYSSEUS AND THE SIRENS."

PRISCILLA (CONT'D)

We were the magic ones once. The Greeks built amphitheaters just to hear our songs, but, by sharing our songs, the Greeks gained the ability to sing them. Thus making us causalities of society's consumption. Reduced to stealing magic from others to sustain ourselves. But, now, they praise your "black girl magic."

It lasts for a moment, before morphing again into a swirly, oil-painted version of "A PORTRAIT OF A NEGRESS."

Meddy's eyes widen in fear.

Priscilla turns back to Meddy with the rag in hand.

PRISCILLA (CONT'D)

But with every strand of hair we curl, that magic spreads until it only sustains our family's lives.

In a flash, Priscilla covers Meddy's mouth with it.

Meddy lets out a BLOODCURDLING SCREAM as her body convulses.

PRISCILLA (CONT'D)

Be quiet, bitch!

Slowly, Meddy passes out.

The Sisters step back from the table.

PRISCILLA (CONT'D)

She, clearly, likes it rough.

Thea and Agatha LAUGH maniacally.

INT. MESS HALL - ANTHEMOS SPA - DAY

MEDDY'S SCREAM ECHOES throughout the white-tiled, drab Mess Hall. Stylists serve food to the Missing Black Men. The Stylists try to place the disembodied echo.

None of the Black Men respond to it, except Jason.

The echo dances into Jason's ears like a pained RINGING as he and O wait in a conveyor belt, prison-like lunch line. Trays in their hands. Jason rubs his temples.

JASON
Do you hear that?

O doesn't respond. He focuses on the food like a trance. Dons a huge smile. Jason gets closer to his shoulder.

JASON (CONT'D)
O?

Jason places a hand on his shoulder. Shakes him.

JASON (CONT'D)
O!

O snaps out of it. Shakes his head and blinks his eyes as he looks around the room. Stops when his eyes land on Jason.

JASON (CONT'D)
That sound. Did you hear it?

O
You trippin', bruh. Get some grub.
Gotta carb-o-load for these hoes

Jason watches O. Something's off. He turns back to the hall.

O (CONT'D)
They got fire noods 'round here.

Jason turns back to O. Furrows his brow.

JASON
Nudes?

O
Naw, noods.

Noodles PLOP onto his tray. Marinara meat sauce cascades after the noodles. A CRAB MEATBALL SPLATS on top.

JASON
That looks like Leon's. Even got
the crab meatballs.

Jason surveys the Mess Hall. The Black Men gawk at him with cheshire grins. Jason gulps. Plays it cool. O eases off.

AT A BOOTH

Jason eases in. O drops into the seat in front of him.

Jason raises an eyebrow as O massacres his plate of food with his hands and face.

JASON (CONT'D)
Ease up. Nobody's gonna take it
from you.

O lifts up. Marinara sauce drips from his face like blood.

A Stylist, in a white short skirt and tight top built to expose one thing or two, glides by with a spice shaker.

STYLIST #1
Oregano?

JASON
Um, yeah. Sure.

Jason's eyes dart away from O and up to the Stylist as she sprinkles oregano on his pasta, but Jason still won't eat.

Instead, he watches O eat. Animalistic. It's gross.

Jason loses his appetite. Pushes his tray forward, then his splitting headache strikes again. Jason struggles with it.

JASON (CONT'D)
Shit--Man, I'm not feeling good.
I'm gonna go back to my room--

O snatches his hand.

O
Before sampling the party favors?

O raises an eyebrow at the Stylist.

O (CONT'D)
Gotta find your fancy, after all.

Jason looks around at the CHESHIRE GRINS that gawk at him. Gulps. Plays it cool, then spots Al leaving with a Stylist.

JASON
Then, hopefully, my fancy is
wandering the halls, too.

O watches Jason leave after Al. Flares his nostrils.

INT. LEON'S HOUSE - DAY

Leon SNORES himself awake on the couch. Surveys the house. Spots his apology spaghetti still on the island. Rises.

Leon trudges over to Jason's closed bedroom door.

KNOCK! KNOCK!

LEON

Hey, Jason. Ya in there?

Leon looks at the back wall. Smiles and nods at the pictures of Theresa. Glances to the bucket. Then SIGHS.

LEON (CONT'D)

I'm coming in.

INT. JASON'S BEDROOM - DAY

Leon eases into the room.

LEON

Specs?

Leon scratches his bare head.

LEON (CONT'D)

Huh.

The picture of Theresa bites its nails.

EXT. DOWNTOWN COOLCHITOWN - DAY

The purples, oranges, and pinks of sunrise fill the sky.

Leon shoves his key into the barbershop's door. Eases into...

INT. UNCLE LEON'S BARBERSHOP - DAY

He sets a coat on the rack. Passes his station.

Leon looks around. Disappointed.

One of the lamps won't turn on. Leon SMACKS it to no avail.

LEON

Dammit. Not this thing too.

Leon grabs a broom.

Sweeps for a bit, then cleans the mirrors, smiles at his reflection, then spots more grime. Wipes it.

Leon cleans some trimmers. He drops one. Breaks it. Stares at the broken clippers with a calm anger. Forces a smile.

He flips the sign to open.

Leon sits dejected in his chair. Pulls out the tupperware of spaghetti. Munches it while he channel surfs static.

CHRINNNNGG!

Harold and Percy slip in the door.

HAROLD
Sorry we're late.

Leon struggles with the busted TV. Gives up on the remote.

LEON
Can't one of y'all fix something?
Damn lamp's on the fritz now, too.

Percy stands on his chair. Studies the cords behind the TV.

HAROLD
Let me see that.

Harold takes the remote inspects it. Leon watches them.

LEON
Either of y'all seen Specs?

PERCY
No, I'm sure he's all right.

Percy gives the TV a good smack. "FRIDAY" pops on. Right where it left off.

PERCY (CONT'D)
Got it!

Harold gazes out as Shoppers ease past the window dressed in TWEED JACKETS' WHITE BLOUSES, TRILBY HATS, LONG FLOWING DRESSES. All from another era. PLANTATION OWNERS.

HAROLD
Oh, to have the balls of a cracker.

Percy nods in agreement, then jumps down from his chair.

Leon studies Hair's storefront. Sees Vultures on the roof.

A Vulture flies down to O's car parked out front of Hair. Leon watches as the Vulture lands on it. Tenses.

LEON
It ain't like him.

PERCY

He's probably just doing the good old walk of shame.

LEON

Jason? Doin' a walk of shame? Trust me, we'd sooner see a pig fry.

HAROLD

It's fly.

LEON

What?

HAROLD

The phrase. It's "we'd sooner see a pig fly." Like "if pigs could fly?"

LEON

Harold, I--just watch the store. Imma have a word with the competition.

Leon walks out the door across the street toward Hair.

INT. BACK ROOM - DAY

The Sisters stare at Meddy.

CHRINGG CHRINGG!

PRISCILLA

Shit.

Priscilla whips her head around. Checks her watch.

PRISCILLA (CONT'D)

Stay here.

Thea nods. Agatha WHINES.

AGATHA

You always get the first one!

PRISCILLA

If father heard your whining, he wouldn't be pleased, sister. Now, get back in there and earn our immortality.

Agatha SMACKS a piece of gum as Priscilla slips out.

INT. HAIR - DAY

Leon wanders around the shop curiouser and curiouser. The Bronze Bull captures his attention. He gazes into his own reflection in the water beneath it.

Slowly, Priscilla's face creeps into the watery reflection.

PRISCILLA

Ahem.

LEON

Nice sculpture ya got here.

PRISCILLA

It was a gift from Greece.

Leon narrows his eyes confused.

PRISCILLA (CONT'D)

Our family formulated the Sauce and other useful creations there, ages ago. Some still reside in its rustic mountains to this day.

LEON

And others?

PRISCILLA

Elsewhere.

LEON

Damn, that's craaaaazy.

(clears throat)

Well, speaking of family, seen my nephew around?

PRISCILLA

Nephew?

LEON

He works here. Jason Williams.

PRISCILLA

Oh, we love Jason.

LEON

I'm sure you do.

PRISCILLA

But I'm sorry. It's just us.

LEON

Us?

PRISCILLA
My sisters and I. And, now, you.

Leon checks the place out. Tries to look around Priscilla but she counters every move, blocking his vision.

Leon spots a rack full of the PURPLE SHAMPOO BOTTLES. Eases over past Priscilla. Bumps her shoulder.

LEON
So this is the little bottle that's
caught the town by storm.

Leon reaches for a bottle.

CRUNCH!!!

He glances down.

A broken shard from the glass jar of Barbicide.

Leon's eyes widen as he notices the blood on the floor and duffel bags full of cash nearby.

Behind him, Priscilla narrows hers.

LEON (CONT'D)
What is--

In a mad dash, Priscilla puts Leon in a headlock.

Leon struggles as Priscilla holds his neck. Rips a tuft of her hair from her head.

PRISCILLA
Fuck!

Priscilla lets him go.

LEON
Been snatchin' wigs since '76,
bitch. Ain't nothing for me to--

Leon raises his hand, but the hair isn't there.

LEON (CONT'D)
I coulda sworn I...

He opens his palm.

BLACK FEATHERS.

LEON (CONT'D)
What the--

Leon glances up and manages to squeeze a YELP out before Priscilla swings a wicked fast right hook. He's out cold.

Priscilla looks to the back room, then to the shimmering Bronze Bull in the morning light.

PRISCILLA
Thea, drain old Bessie!

A GROAN reverberates from the back room.

The water beneath the Bronze Bull GURGLES as it swirls down the fountain's drain.

INT. LONG WOODED HALLWAY - DAY

Jason holds his head as he cautiously eases down the hallway after Al and the Stylist. Traces doorknobs with his hands.

WHITE LIGHT BEAMS in as the Stylist opens the "Private" door for Al. Offers him a WHITE CLAY MASK shaped like a BULLDOG.

MOANS...SHRIEKS...DEAFENING SCREAMS...

Al puts the mask on, then, hesitantly, enters. The Stylist follows. The door SLAMS shut behind them.

The SCREAMS die down...until silence.

Jason closes his eyes. Focuses on hearing.

Down the hall, in a BLANK PICTURE FRAME near the door to AL's room, AL's MUGSHOT WITH A CHESHIRE GRIN fades into existence.

Jason never notices it as his hand pauses mere inches from the doorknob to Hair's Private Room.

Jason opens his eyes. His headache subsided. He studies the knob. Almost turns it when--

FEMININE GIGGLES...

FEET PATTER on the wood...

JASON
Hello.

More GIGGLES...

JASON (CONT'D)
Who's there?

Jason whips to a corner of the hallway.

A HAND slinks around the corner, then it SLAPS firm on the wall. The hand beckons him

Jason narrows his eyes. Hesitant.

The hand disappears around the corner.

JASON (CONT'D)

Wait!

Jason runs after it. As he rounds the corner, a door further down the hallway slowly closes.

More GIGGLES...

Shut.

Jason creeps down the hallway. Contemplates the door.

Unlike the mugshots, there's a picture of a Vulture with a TWISTED NECK beside it.

Reaches for the knob. Thinks twice.

JASON (CONT'D)

Who are you?

MANGLED SIREN (O.S.)

(sing-song-ish)

That's my phone...

JASON

What?

MANGLED SIREN(O.S.)

(louder)

That's my phone...

Jason pulls away from the door. Studies the knob.

He reaches for it. Closer...closer...

JASON

That's my phone? Is my--

O saunters past the corner hand in hand with a Stylist. Eases her into his room.

O

Jason. Check it.

Jason turns to O as O humps the air.

O (CONT'D)
Trapped a live one in there?

JASON
You know it.

O closes his door while flicking his tongue between two fingers at Jason.

Jason EXHALES. Glances down for a moment, then back.

JASON (CONT'D)
Look, if you've got my phone--

MANGLED SIREN
That's my phone!

In a split second, the door bursts open.

A MANGLED SIREN, super thin Stylist with the a body covered in patchy black feathers, scaly feet, a hag's head, and bloody beak, snatches Jason's leg from the hallway.

Shackles CLINK and CLANK into the darkness of the room. They cling to the Mangled Siren's ankles.

JASON
Jesus!

Jason SCREAMS. Kicks the Mangled Siren as it bites his leg.

THE MANGLED SIREN
That's my phone you fucking bird!
That's my phone--

Jason launches a heel into her face. Stuns her.

He rockets to his feet. SLAMS the door shut.

Behind it, the Mangled Siren scratches. GRUNTS. Animalistic.

Jason sees the picture by the door. Something dawns on him.

JASON
The vulture from the--it's a--this
can't be real.

Jason gazes down the hallway at the door to Hair's Private Room. His eyes widen.

JASON (CONT'D)
O.

Jason takes off down the hallway.

INT. O'S ROOM - ANTHEMOS SPA - DAY

O's room is identical to Jason's in every way. He even has a STUFFED TAXIDERMY SNOW CRAB above his headboard.

Jason bursts through the door while O smooches the Stylist.

O
The fuck, man?

Jason grabs O's clothes from the floor. Throws them to him.

JASON
Get dressed. We need to go. Now.

O
You're killing the vibe.

JASON
Just trust me, we need to go. This place isn't right.

O goes to his nightstand. Grabs a cup of the Murky Liquid.

O
Just take another swig--

JASON
No, nigga! I just got attacked by a fucking--a fucking--fuck I don't even what to call that shit!

O
But the spa--

JASON
There's a bird out there with a fucking human body! We need to fucking go!

The Stylist TWEAKS on the bed. She's having a seizure.

Jason glances over, which gives O enough time to slip a BLACK BURLAP BAG from one of his pants' pockets.

O
I'm not leaving. Neither are you.

As Jason turns back, O throws the bag over Jason's face. Jason kicks, SCREAMS, and flails to no avail.

O supplexes Jason onto the ground, then drags him out of the room as Jason struggles. The Stylist smiles. Rises. A ruse.

INT. JASON'S ROOM - DAY

O tears the bag from Jason's head. Cloudy. Out of focus.

The Stylist binds Jason's arms and legs to the bedposts.

JASON

Let me go!

The Stylist tightens the knots. Jason's going nowhere.

O sits in a chair by Jason's bed. Watches him.

JASON (CONT'D)

Get me out of here!

Jason pulls on the ropes. Tests them. Taut. His breaths heavy, labored.

O

You want to know the secret ingredient to the Sauce?

(scoffs)

You're about to find out.

JASON

Fuck the secret! They're using us.

O

It feels nice to be needed.

A sanguine smile consumes O's face.

BANG! BANG! BANG!

Methodical. Metallic THUDS blast into the room from the door.

O (CONT'D)

Come in.

CLANK!

The door to his room swings open.

PRISCILLA

I hear you've been experiencing... low testosterone, Mr. Williams.

Priscilla, dressed in her full white trench coat and plague doctor's mask, saunters into the room. The coat and hood now lightly bloodied.

She nods to the Stylist. The Stylist leaves the room.

PRISCILLA (CONT'D)
Allow me to, cure your affliction.

The Stylist returns with a blanketed metal tray.

A WHITE CLAY VULTURE MASK now covers her face.

Jason's eyes widen at the masks. Creepy.

SCALPELS, CLAMPS, SURGERY/TORTURE ACCOUTREMENT RATTLE
underneath the blanket on the metal tray.

Priscilla swipes a clipboard from the base of the bed. She
"tsk, tsk, tsk's." RIPS the white blanket from the tray.

JASON
Jesus Christ!

Glass cases surround TWO JUGUM PENIS', a medieval bear trap
for your junk, alongside other implements.

PRISCILLA
Quite a sick one, here. Strap the
poor "man" up.

The Stylist ambles to Jason. Holds his legs still as he
fights and kicks at the Stylist.

O's hand glides over the tray. Lifts a Jugum Penis.

JASON
What the fuck is that?

PRISCILLA
Part of the cure to your...ailment.

JASON
Ailment?

Priscilla takes the contraption.

O curtsies. Imitates the "ORIGINAL JIM CROW."

Jason struggles with the Stylist as Priscilla straps the
Jugum Penis around Jason's waist. Tucks his junk inside of it
like cheese in a mousetrap.

The Stylist backs away as Priscilla rifles through the
equipment on the gurney.

JASON (CONT'D)
I'm perfectly fine. See this whole
thing is just a misunderstanding--

PRISCILLA

Low testosterone is nothing to be ashamed of, but to maximize your stay and cure you, I need to remove your sperm glands. A simple surgery that will only impair your little buddy for an hour or so.

Priscilla pulls out a pair of rubber gloves.

PRISCILLA (CONT'D)

We need your sperm, and your ailment prevents you from falling under our spell and giving it freely. So I'm obliged to take it.

Jason fights the binds as hard as he can.

Priscilla "tsk, tsk, tsk's."

PRISCILLA (CONT'D)

You might set it off.

His eyes land on the Jugum Penis around his junk.

PRISCILLA (CONT'D)

The surgery is delicate. Quite delicate. I need absolute stillness while I work in your. Regions.

The Stylist grabs the other Jugum Penis from the tray. Hands it to Priscilla along with a CARROT.

PRISCILLA (CONT'D)

I must take precautions not to endanger the patient's sperm gland. Move too much and...

Priscilla inserts the carrot into the larger Jugum Penis. The claw CRUNCHES through the carrot. Absolutely shreds it.

Jason's jaw drops as the splintered top part of the carrot falls to the bedroom floor.

Priscilla glances at O.

PRISCILLA (CONT'D)

You should leave, my dear boy. Your services are no longer required.

O nods. Eases over to Priscilla. Gives her Jason's keys.

PRISCILLA (CONT'D)
I hope you'll find your. Severance
package. Adequate.

JASON
Help me, O.

O leaves. SLAMS the door shut. Jason sheds a fearful tear.
Priscilla SNAPS her glove.

INT. LONG WOODED HALLWAY - DAY

O eases away from Jason's door.

Stylists line the hallway. Each wears a different WHITE CLAY
VULTURE MASK. Each one unique to its wearer.

At the end of the line, Agatha stands between them with a
mask of her own, an ORNATE VULTURE with her unmistakable red
lipstick. In her hands, she holds another mask. O's.

O saunters uneasily up to Agatha.

AGATHA
Our faith in you was well placed.

She presents the mask to O.

A WHITE SNOW CRAB.

O takes it.

AGATHA (CONT'D)
Now, please. Enjoy.

Agatha motions to the "Private" room. Opens the door.

INT. PRIVATE ROOM - DAY

After a FLASH of WHITE LIGHT, the Stylists pull O inside the
room. A riptide of debauchery. O grins. This is his peace.

INT. LONG WOODED HALLWAY - DAY

Agatha closes the door after them. Grins. She turns down the
hall to O's room.

A MUGSHOT of O with a CHESHIRE GRIN materializes behind the
blank picture frame by his door.

She turns back to the door to the Private Room. Eases out.

INT. JASON'S IMMACULATE BEDROOM - DAY

Priscilla brandishes a syringe. Flicks it.

PRISCILLA

Now, just a little prick, and we'll get started.

Jason tenses and struggles, then glances at his crotch. He doesn't want to trip the jugum penis, so he surrenders.

JASON

Prick me, and I'll kill you.

PRISCILLA

Sweet dreams.

Priscilla smirks, then injects him. Jason slowly, then rapidly drifts off.

INT/EXT. THERESA'S CAR - NIGHT (FLASHBACK)

Younger Jason glances out the driver's side window. Blood drips on the outside around the crack left by Theresa's head.

Outside on the ground, Theresa barely breathes while an OFFICER (30s), white, kneels on her spine.

YOUNGER JASON

Mom?

Behind him, YOUNGER MEDDY (17) snaps to while sitting shotty.

YOUNGER MEDDY

Drive, Jason! We need to--

CRACK!

The Officer smashes her face with a baton. A fatal blow. The Officer rises up, then glances to the window.

Jason shifts the car into gear. Leaves the Officer behind.

INT. JASON'S IMMACULATE ROOM - DAY

Jason's teary eyes open. He surveys the room, while Priscilla cleans her implements at a sink.

Jason's locks on a bloody mass of flesh. His SPERM GLANDS.

JASON

Go...

Adrenaline PUMPS through Jason's veins. He bites onto his blanket. He winces as he dislocates his left thumb.

Carefully, Jason snakes his free hand down to his junk. Slides the Jugum Penis off. Unties himself.

Priscilla finally turns the water off. Pops her coat.

PRISCILLA
You performed marvelously, Mr.
Williams, as expected.

Jason stands on top of the bed. Blood trickles down his leg onto the white blanket. Not a lot. He raises the Jugum Penis.

JASON
You ain't seen nothing yet.

Jason shoves the Jugum Penis into an eye socket of the mask. Priscilla SCREAMS as her eyeball bursts like a tomato. Leaks blood like a trail of spilt marinara sauce.

Jason snatches the keys of the metal tray. Opens his door.

INT. LONG WOODED HALLWAY - DAY

An alarm BLARES as Jason runs as fast as his pained body can.

From his doorway, Priscilla rises. Brandishes her buzzsaw.

RNNNNNNNNNNNN!

Jason turns a corner. Only more doors with mugshots. Turns another corner. The same. It's a loop. As he plots his next move, Priscilla swings down toward him, but Jason dodges it. He races to O's room.

JASON
Come on. Come on!

Jason shoves the key in, then pushes through.

INT. O'S ROOM - DAY

O reaches out for an appalled Jason in the doorway.

He lies in an MEDIEVAL IRON BED with his shins cut in half. Mask still on his face. Blood spurts on the floor.

Stylists eat his feet.

The door SLAMS shut.

INT. LONG WOODED HALLWAY - DAY

RNNNNNNNN!

Priscilla slashes down.

Jason collapses to the ground to dodge it. Crab walks backwards until he hits a door.

He glances up.

It's the Mangled Siren's door.

He smirks.

Priscilla creeps closer...closer..closer--

Jason BANGS on the door.

The Mangled Siren throws the door open. Lunges at Jason, but he rolls out of the way just in time for Priscilla to take the brunt of the Mangled Siren's wanton attack.

He makes a break for the door to the Private Room while they fight each other.

PRISCILLA

Get off me! He'll get away--

Jason turns back as the Mangled Siren comes to her senses, but she's too far down the hall to reach him. She SCREECHES, then sprints after him.

JASON

Fuck your invitation.

Jason shoves the key in. Steps into a white light.

MATCH CUT TO:

INT. PRIVATE ROOM - DAY

The white light subsides as Jason breathes heavily, then surveys the room.

The Missing Black Men have been corralled like cattle to the edges of the room and attached to a piston-like machine on the wall. Pants at their ankles. Lots of SEXUAL MOANING.

Bowls labeled "THE SAUCE" between their feet.

Many of the Men are thin and malnourished. Some have collapsed on the floor from exhaustion or death.

Others feast on Priscilla.

SCREAMS. Carnage. Blood. A dog pile of monstrous proportions.

Stylists dance amongst the orgy unaffected by Priscilla in a drug-fueled trance.

An analog clock blinks.

13:27PM.

Jason glances at his hands hardly able to move his fingers. Slowly, he gains muscle control.

JASON

Come on.

With strain, Jason yanks his junk out of the machine...

...then keels over in pain.

He holds his stomach. Blood seeps down his pant leg.

Through a grimace, Jason sneaks a peek at the door, then back to the carnage. He looks for O.

JASON (CONT'D)

I gotta get us out of here.

Jason frantically creeps around the room, careful to avoid the Stylists. He investigates the Men.

SNAP!

JASON (CONT'D)

Come on. Give me something.

Jason snaps his fingers in one Man's face. No response. Not even from his extremely large and dilated pupils.

Jason backs away and bumps into a Stylist.

JASON (CONT'D)

Shit--

Jason covers his mouth. The Stylist collapses.

No one responds to Jason. To them, he isn't there.

Jason spots O. Races over.

O has already withered to bones and muscly sinews. Atrophy eats him by the second.

JASON (CONT'D)
Wake up, O!

SNAP! SNAP! SNAP!

JASON (CONT'D)
Wake the fuck up!

Jason shakes O.

CRACK!!!

O's spine breaks in half from the pressure.

Jason jumps back, mortified.

O's body crumples and contorts, for a moment, then suddenly--
His eyes SNAP open to the WHITES.

O lunges at Jason like a spider.

JASON (CONT'D)
Jesus Christ!

They all heard that. On cue, ALL of the Men's eyes SNAP open to the WHITES.

Jason hobbles to the door. GROANS. Grits his teeth.

Stylists grab hold of Jason just before he gets to the door. He fights them off, but their hold is strong.

JASON (CONT'D)
Let go!

He breaks away for a second. Sprints unevenly to the door.

INT. BACK ROOM - DAY

The lights FLICKER and BUZZ.

Something DARK and FAST plays such as "PAINT IT BLACK" by The Rolling Stones.

Agatha sits. Faces away from the door. She watches over Meddy with her headphones on. Swipes through an ESSENCE MAGAZINE. Chews on gum.

The oil painting of a "Portrait of a Negress" has shifted back to its normal hyperrealistic art style.

The door behind Agatha swings open.

Jason struggles in the doorway as Stylists hold him back. He reaches out for something. Anything.

Agatha blows a bubble. It POPS. She's disappointed.

The door SLAMS shut again.

Agatha takes a headphone off. Turns to the door. Narrows her eyes. Shrugs. Turns back to Meddy and her magazine.

Agatha's eyes widen as she flips a page.

AGATHA

Oh my.

She rotates the magazine. A SMALL SLIVER in the center of the page unfolds until it hangs to her knees.

AGATHA (CONT'D)

His blood circulation must be irregular.

Meddy's leg moves a little. Agatha doesn't notice.

INT. PRIVATE ROOM - DAY

Jason struggles with the Stylists. He swats their arms.

JASON

Fuck off!

CLINK!

Priscilla's buzzsaw skitters across the ground.

Jason spots it. He stretches.

Closer...Closer...Closer...

Got it.

Jason flicks it on--

RNNNNNNNNNNNN!

Jason exhales, then saws at the Stylists.

Stylists SCREECH and crumple as he HACKS through them.

Blood flies all over Jason and the walls.

An absolutely gory mess of bodies, innards, and hair.

Jason glances at Priscilla's still arm underneath the feasting malnourished Men.

JASON (CONT'D)
How's my stock rubbing you now?

Jason staggers to the door. Cracks it open.

THROUGH THE CRACK

Agatha admires her magazine.

Meddy is deathly still.

Jason slowly opens the door.

INT. BACK ROOM - DAY

He creeps toward Agatha...

But she's disappeared. Just the LONE BLACK FEATHER floats down to where she was sitting.

Jason stands upright. Confused.

He notices a Vulture, now, overlooking Meddy. It cocks its head at him.

JASON
What. The.

He rushes to Meddy, but, as he gets closer, the Vulture swoops down and TRANSFORMS into Agatha, but the only thing recognizable is her red lipstick.

Her body has aged decades in seconds. Decrepit. Black feathers protrude from her skin. Long, razor sharp talons extend from her hands.

Her TRUE SIREN form.

JASON (CONT'D)
Fuck!

Jason jumps out of the way of Agatha's slash. Barely misses.

He manages to cut her arm with the buzzsaw...

...but it barely affects her.

CAWWWW!!!!

Agatha grabs his throat in her talons. Raises him in the air.

AGATHA
 Cash cows don't escape the pen.
 (brandishes her free claw)
 Guess I'll have to--

Behind Agatha, Meddy rises with a can of hairspray in one hand and a lighter in the other.

MEDDY
 (extremely loopy)
 Somebody request roast bitch?

Meddy nearly falls as she flicks the lighter and, then sprays the hairspray creating a mini flamethrower.

Agatha jumps back. Lets go of Jason.

But she doesn't avoid the fiery plume. Agatha SCREAMS as she's, literally, cooked inside and out.

Jason watches Meddy in awe as Agatha collapses to the ground. Most of her feathers are either scorched or plain melted. She's dead as fuck though.

Jason and Meddy look at each other, then back to the body.

JASON
 That is the weirdest looking chicken head I've ever seen.

Meddy studies all of the blood covering Jason.

Glances past him at the blood trail from the Private Room.

JASON (CONT'D)
 Best not to go in there.

Meddy's perplexed gaze falls back on Jason.

JASON (CONT'D)
 They had us trapped in some sort of group hallucination.

Meddy looks over to the metal gurney. The bottle.

MEDDY
 The DMT. That's why I'm out here.
 I'm too tolerant.

Jason glances at the track marks on her arm.

JASON
 That's what you shoot up with?

Meddy thinks, then exhales.

MEDDY
I don't shoot up. Mine's
prescribed, too, asshole.

Jason studies her.

MEDDY (CONT'D)
(through gritted teeth)
I was diagnosed with PTSD after
your Mom's...That's why I couldn't
come to the funeral. Why I had to
leave. The day your Mom died, I
died, too.

Jason studies Meddy. He's sullen. Never considered her pain
prior to now.

JASON
Then that makes two of us.

He gently grabs her hand.

JASON (CONT'D)
But I don't plan on dying with you
a second time.

Meddy smiles.

BANG! BANG! BANG!

THEA (O.S.)
Just finished loading Old Bessie!

Jason and Meddy whip to each other.

MEDDY
Old Bessie?

JASON
Do you still have your phone?

Meddy checks her pockets. Nothing.

MEDDY
They must have taken it.

JASON
We need to call for help.

BANG! BANG! BANG!

THEA (O.S.)
Agatha?

Slowly, they glance down to Agatha's body.

Jason turns back to Meddy.

MEDDY
No.

JASON
I mean--

MEDDY
I'm not touching that thing.

JASON
You killed it.

Meddy studies the charred body. Gulps.

Jason watches as Meddy cringes and bends down.

She fishes through what must be Agatha's pockets. Winces. Pulls out a cellphone. Passes it to Jason.

MEDDY
How the fuck do we even explain
this to the cops? They're like--
like--actual fucking monsters.

Jason thinks, then dials a phone number.

INT. UNCLE LEON'S BARBERSHOP - DAY

Harold bleeds out on the floor as the shop's phone RINGS.

Percy crawls toward the phone leaving his own blood trail across the linoleum. He reaches for the phone--

Yates smashes his hand with a CRUNCH under his boot heel, then kicks him across the face. Picks up the phone.

JASON (O.S.)
Leon! My boss kidnapped me and held
me captive in Hair. I need help.

Yates mouths the word "talk" to Percy, but Percy won't.

Yates grinds his boot on Percy's hand. Percy WHINES in pain.

JASON (O.S.) (CONT'D)
Leon?

Yates whips a gun out. Motions for Percy to talk again.

Percy glances up. Knows he's facing death.

PERCY
Leon's on his way over, Specs.

JASON (O.S.)
Percy?

PERCY
Yeah. Everything's gonna be aight.

Yates ends the call.

YATES
Thanks, darkie.

PERCY
Even your racial epithets are bald.

YATES
(mockingly)
"Your racial epithets are bald." At
least I got a face, nigger.

BANG!

Yates shoots Percy in the face, then pockets his gun, chugs from his jug of water, then eases out of the shop. Whistles to an aged, racist tune.

Blood leaks from Percy's obliterated face.

INT. BACK ROOM - DAY

Jason glances at the phone.

JASON
My uncle's on his way here.

MEDDY
What now?

Jason glances around the room. His eyes land on a bookshelf.

INT. HAIR - DAY

Water around the Bull boils. The midsection of the Bull closes down like butterfly doors around an unconscious Leon.

Thea paces outside the Back Room door.

THEA
Agatha, I--

BZZZZ! BZZZZ!

Thea answers her phone.

THEA (CONT'D)
Yes, father?

Thea's eyes widen.

INT. BACK ROOM - DAY

Meddy and Jason brace the door with the bookshelf. Purple bottles of shampoo spill out of it.

THEA (O.S.)
Great! Just fucking great!

They look at each other. Frantically, get back to work.

CHIKKA! CHIKKA! CHIKKA!

The door knob twists, but it's locked.

THEA (O.S.) (CONT'D)
Open this door, heathens!

THUNK!

INT. HAIR - DAY

On the other side of the door, Thea, now transformed into her gross decrepit true SIREN form rams the door with a shoulder.

THEA
Let me in!

INT. BACK ROOM - DAY

THUNK!

Dust cascades from the door as it cracks. The bookshelf inches further and further away with every strike.

MEDDY
This door isn't gonna hold!

Jason paces. Thinks. Runs his hands through his hair. Calms.

Glances to the shampoo bottles on the floor. Smirks. An idea.

JASON
Let her in.

MEDDY
You must still be high.

JASON
No, I have an idea.

Jason picks up two shampoo bottles.

JASON (CONT'D)
Trust me...You watch World Star,
right?

INT. HAIR - DAY

Thea braces for one last ram.

3...2...1!

She races toward the door, but it swings open to...

INT. BACK ROOM - DAY

...a slip n' slide-esque stream of shampoo lies on the floor.

THEA
No, no, no!

Thea tries to pump the brakes, but it's too late.

She glides past Jason and Meddy. Swipes at them but misses.

She falls forward.

Scorpion slides across the shampoo stream chin first.

SLOW MOTION: Shampoo ramps up her chin into her mouth.

CRACK!!!

BACK TO NORMAL: Thea collides with the back wall. Her neck snaps on impact. Definitely dead.

Jason grabs Meddy.

JASON
Run!

INT. PRIVATE ROOM - DAY

The gaggle of Missing Men chomp on Priscilla.

Her still arm twitches.

She's VERY MUCH SO ALIVE.

PRISCILLA

Enough!

In one powerful YELL, Priscilla EXPLODES up and throws the glorified scavengers all over the small room. She winces as her wounds heal. She waltzes into...

INT. BACK ROOM - DAY

Priscilla surveys the absolute horror. Both of her Sisters. Dead. She leers at the open door.

PRISCILLA

Ja...

INT. HAIR - DAY

Lights FLICKER, SWING, and BUZZ.

PRISCILLA (O.S.)

...son!!!!

Jason and Meddy run through the hallway into the main room.

The stomach of the Bull burns a bright red.

Leon SCREAMS inside of it.

MEDDY

Oh my god.

JASON

Leon?

LEON (O.S.)

Specs? They cookin' my ass!

INT. THE BULL - DAY

Leon boils alive inside the Bull.

LEON

I'm never makin' meatballs again!

INT. HAIR - DAY

Jason touches the bull. Rips his hand away.

JASON

Fuck!

Meddy's antsy.

MEDDY

Jason, we gotta--

PRISCILLA (O.S.)

You insufferable mortals.

Jason and Meddy gawk at Priscilla. Blood all over her. A severed head in her hands.

PRISCILLA (CONT'D)

Sirens are hard to kill.

JASON

Your sisters must have missed that memo.

Priscilla's nostrils flare.

PRISCILLA

My sisters were weak.

JASON

Shame.

PRISCILLA

You could have been a great addition to the Sauce.

JASON

You milk black dudes for jizz.

PRISCILLA

And none of them complained.

Meddy's eyes dart between the both of them.

MEDDY

Say what now?

JASON

Long story, just get my Uncle out of that bull.

Meddy nods. Spots a towel at a Stylist's station.

Priscilla whips out her razor sharp talons.

Jason snatches the shitty broom.

JASON (CONT'D)
Bring it, you feather-headed bitch.

Meddy races to the towel

Priscilla jumps at her. Jason intercepts Priscilla.

CRACK!

Jason smacks her across the face with the broom. Breaks it.

He smirks. Now, he has something sharp, too.

Priscilla stretches her jaw.

CAWWW!

She seemingly flies to strike him with her talons, but he defends with the broom.

Behind them, Meddy wraps the towel around her hands. A makeshift mitten. Opens the bull.

Inside, Leon struggles to breathe.

Jason glances over at Leon with concern, then--

WHACK!

Priscilla smacks him across the face with a talon. Draws blood and knocks him to the ground.

The broom handle flies across the floor.

Jason and Priscilla both find the broom. Priscilla smirks as Jason attempts to crawl over.

Priscilla grabs his pants leg. Pulls his pants down. Jason pulls his pants up as Priscilla jumps on top of him. Strangles him.

PRISCILLA
Shouldn't have left the pen!

Priscilla LAUGHS maniacally.

Jason struggles to breathe. He looks around for something. Anything. He reaches for the broom. It's too far but...

...he looks at his hand, there's some shampoo on it.

An idea.

Jason focuses on Priscilla's face. Waits for her to open her mouth nice and wide, then SHOVES his hand inside.

Priscilla chokes. Lets go of Jason for a split second.

Jason slips away. Grabs the broom.

SHIKKKK!

Jason stabs Priscilla, who catches the point with her taloned palm, but the sharp end goes THROUGH her hand.

Jason forces the broom into Priscilla's ribs. Pins her hand to her body.

Priscilla YELPS. Collapses to her knees in agony.

Meddy tends to Leon. Jason jogs over.

JASON

Easy, easy.

MEDDY

He's still breathing.

JASON

Good.

Priscilla rises to her feet on the other side of the Bull.

PRISCILLA

That was a clever little trick.

Jason looks up as Priscilla yanks her hand from her side.

She spits up a bit of blood, but her body's already healing.

PRISCILLA (CONT'D)

But not enough.

CRINNNNG!

Jason and Meddy turn around to see Sheriff Yates.

Yates trains his gun on Priscilla who raises her hands.

SHERIFF YATES

Is everyone okay?

JASON

Thank God!

MEDDY

Thank God!

MEDDY (CONT'D)
This bitch kidnapped us!

JASON
Get us out of here!

Yates freezes. Priscilla laughs, then lowers her hands.

PRISCILLA
No, these mortals killed Aglaope
and Thelxiepeia, father.

SHERIFF YATES
What? Dammit, P! How could you let--

He cuffs Meddy.

MEDDY
What the fuck?

While Yates struggles with the cuffs, Jason faces Priscilla.

JASON
Father? You're their father?
Sirens...the greek shit...you're--

SHERIFF YATES
Poseidon. Ya no good, spook.

PRISCILLA
Every girl gets her daddy issues
from someone.

Jason eyes a jar of barbicide on one of the nearby stalls.

JASON
I hope daddy likes acid.

Jason sprints to the stall. Snatches the barbicide as Yates whips out his pistol.

BANG!

Jason rockets the barbicide at Yates' face while taking the shot to the shoulder.

The barbicide smashes on Yates' face.

SHERIFF YATES
Ahhh! My eyes!

His face burns from the chemicals.

Yates drops the gun. Once it hits the ground...

BANG!

It blasts another bullet straight into his dick.

SHERIFF YATES (CONT'D)
My dick!

He grabs his crotch, then collapses.

Meddy grabs the gun. Points it at Priscilla.

CLICK.

No bullets.

Priscilla smirks. She rushes toward Meddy and Jason until--

SHERIFF YATES (CONT'D)
Enough!

PRISCILLA
Father...

Yates rockets back up as the sweat on his face grows until he's covered in a shell-like layer of water until...

The bubble EXPLODES. Knocks the Trio on their asses.

Yates, now shirtless with incredible physique, glares at Jason with SEA-FOAM BLUE glowing eyes. His legs are now crab-like. A centaur but, instead of a horse, Yates is part SNOW CRAB. POSEIDON'S TRUE FORM.

JASON
Holy shit.

MEDDY
Jason! The shampoo! We destroy it,
we destroy them--

As Meddy tosses him the hairspray, Yates SMACKS her across the chest into the wall with one of his legs.

SHERIFF YATES
You're not destroying anything.

MEDDY
Fuck!

JASON
Meddy!

Jason catches the hairspray and pulls out a lighter. He eyes a shelf chock full of the Sauce. Yates keys in on him.

Right as he's about to strike him, Jason lights the shelf ablaze with the flamethrower.

SHERIFF YATES

No!

Yates abandons the attack, in favor of PUKING pure water on the flames to put them out, but Jason races to another shelf. Lights it.

Once Yates puts the first fire out, he turns to the next, but, by then, Jason's already lit a third.

JASON

Leon, get Meddy outta here, now!

Leon nods, then races to Meddy. Gets her up, then--

PRISCILLA

You have a hell of a right, but
you're still only a mortal.

Priscilla, in her TRUE SIREN FORM, slashes Leon with a talon.

LEON

Specs!

Jason turns as Leon falls. Jason watches the light fade from his eyes. Meddy lies still beside his bleeding body.

Jason faces down Priscilla as Yates heads to put out the final inferno. He tosses the hairspray in his hand.

PRISCILLA

Poor, poor Jason. Always the
survivor. The guilt must--

Jason laughs, manically.

PRISCILLA (CONT'D)

What?

JASON

It's just--It's just--This is gonna
make one massive meatball.

In a split second, Jason launches the hairspray into the final blaze. Priscilla and Yates' eyes widen as--

BOOM!

The shelf ERUPTS as the can EXPLODES. The entire shop burns.

SHERIFF YATES
Priscilla!

Priscilla SCREAMS bloody murder as the flames overcome her. Yates tries to put the flames out, but they overwhelm him.

Jason grabs Meddy and Leon, he drapes their arms over his shoulders and carries them out.

EXT. HAIR - DAY

As Jason carries Meddy and Leon out--

Hair EXPLODES. Knocks the Trio onto the sidewalk. Jason turns and watches the flames spiral into the sky before passing out on the sidewalk.

SMASH TO BLACK.

FADE IN:

EXT. HAIR - DAY

Jason's ears RING as he zones out. He sits on the end of a gurney. An EMT bandages his arm and leg.

Shoppers, now dressed in their normal hipster-chique, gawk at the Hair storefront as FIREFIGHTERS put out the final embers.

Yellow "Caution" Tape keeps them at bay as OFFICERS and EMTs gurney body after body out of the shop.

AMBULANCES, FIRETRUCKS, and COP CARS litter the street.

THE RINGING GROWS.

Leon sits in the ambulance attached to a respirator. He breathes stronger, deeper with each second. Bandages cover his abdomen.

THE RINGING PEAKS.

Officers raid O's car. They seize Meddy's equipment.

Jason watches as EMTs gurney O's body out. His withered carcass partially hangs out of an unzipped bodybag.

The RINGING stops as an EMT ZIPS up the bodybag.

CAW!!

Meddy shudders as she eases up to Jason.

They glance up to the Vultures perched on top of buildings on the decayed side of the street.

One by one, the Vultures fly off except for one. It stays. Unnaturally bends its neck.

MEDDY
We should go.

JASON
They're gonna blame all of your burglaries on him.

MEDDY
Then his death meant something.

JASON
And what's that?

MEDDY
That we can both move forward with no baggage dragging us down.

JASON
He'd like that.

MEDDY
Would he?

JASON
I'd like that.

An EMT gurneys Yates out. Yates' face is severely burned and disfigured. Part of his skull peeks out.

SHERIFF YATES
My girls! The fucking niggers killed my girls!

The EMT places one last bandage on Jason's shoulder.

EMT
Free to go, kid.

Meddy helps Jason down. They glance back on the street and shops. Linger on Uncle Leon's Barbershop as Officers surround it with yellow tape.

MEDDY
What'll happen to the barbershop?

JASON
Close for a bit, but it'll reopen.
If not, I'll start my own shop.
(MORE)

JASON (CONT'D)
Bring peace to the hood my Mom's
way. One nappy head at a time.

MEDDY
A man with a plan.

JASON
No, more like a man that could use
a change of scenery.

Jason offers his hand.

JASON (CONT'D)
Walk me home for old time's sake?

Meddy takes his hand.

EXT. LEON'S HOUSE - DAY

Jason and Meddy saunter down the sidewalk toward the house together. They stop on the porch. Jason listens as Meddy nervously word vomits.

MEDDY
There's so much I have to catch you
up on. Like college or my--

Jason plants a kiss on her lips. Stuns Meddy.

JASON
Thanks.

MEDDY
For?

JASON
Coming back.

MEDDY
I didn't come back for you, I came
back for me. But I do owe you.

JASON
Yeah, because getting kidnapped,
drugged, and almost dying wasn't
enough.
(laughs)
So how you plan on paying me back?

MEDDY
(deadpan)
With my ass.

Jason laughs. Thinks she's joking, but Meddy isn't. She raises an eyebrow.

MEDDY (CONT'D)
You gonna need any pills?

Jason stammers for a moment, then glances down. His eyes widen at a massive bulge in his pants. He's gotten an erection. All on his own.

INT. JASON'S BEDROOM - DAY

The nightstand shakes. Theresa's photo covers its eyes until it falls revealing the unopened pills in a trashcan.

Meddy and Jason MOAN as they have the wildest sex the missionary position can offer. His bed RUMBLES.

MEDDY
Right there! Keep going!

JASON
Almost there! Hold on...

Meddy faces the heavens as Jason climaxes, then...

...the room fades away. One piece of furniture at a time.

JASON (CONT'D)
What the--

As Meddy looks down at Jason, her face changes to Priscilla's hag-like Siren form.

Priscilla raises a talon, then plunges it toward him.

He shuts his eyes as a bright WHITE LIGHT overcomes him.

INT. PRIVATE ROOM - DAY

Jason opens his eyes. A euphoric smile blankets his face. MOANS fill Jason's ears as he hangs from the pump.

Jason never made it out.

His withered body grows more frail with each passing second.

Beside him, Agatha and Thea drop a drugged Leon's pants. Strap him in.

LEON
(slurred)
Jason? No.

A COMPLETELY FILLED CONDOM drops into the bowl between Jason's legs.

Meddy stands up from underneath him. Wipes her mouth, then eases to the next Man attached to the pump.

Something NIGHTMARISH plays such as "ACRYLICS" by TNGHT On every hit, the screen exponentially divides creating a mosaic of pleasure and pain. From one screen to two, two to four, until THOUSANDS of images create one black mass.

As we pull out of that black mass, it becomes clear that we're looking at the screen of the analog digital clock in the Private Room as it blinks. Frozen in time.

13:27PM

Priscilla reaches up. Fiddles with the side of it.

PRISCILLA
Times of bliss come and go, but
your suffering will never end.

As Priscilla eases away she whistles to the tune of "I'M BLACK" from the play Hair.

The clock starts again, and a minute passes.

13:28PM.

CLICK! An after burn BUZZES.

FADE TO BLACK.