

Wacky Witnesses

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FADE IN:

INT. CATHOLIC CHURCH - CONFESSIONAL BOOTH - DAY

A Caucasian woman, bright red lips smacking pink bubble gum, sits in the confined space, shuffling and trying to find a position where her elbows won't hit the walls. Meet FRANKIE (30).

Frankie has a torn sheet of flimsy paper in her hand, and she pulls out her chewing gum, sticks it on the paper and pushes it in place over the filtered window between compartments.

Frankie looks uncomfortable as she shuffles and maneuvers into a different position.

INTERCUT WITH:

OTHER HALF OF THE CONFESSIONAL

A PRIEST (60) enters, sits down, and slides the mesh open. He sees something covering it and looks close to see what seems like a red, evil-grinned smiley face with horns drawn on it.

PRIEST

Who's there?

FRANKIE

Blowjob or hand job?

The priest's eyes open wide, as though he's heard a ghost.

PRIEST

(harsh whisper)

Oh my God, Claire? You're supposed to be dead.

FRANKIE

A good day to you, too, Padre. And I go by Frankie now.

PRIEST

Frankie?

FRANKIE

Fancy, right?

(a deep sigh)

Is something wrong with me, Padre?

PRIEST

Other than the fact you kill people for money? No, I think you're just fine.

FRANKIE
Ain't judgin' a sin?

No response. Frankie says nothing for a moment.

PRIEST
I'm listening.

FRANKIE
I don't kill people for money anymore... I'm in this witness protection program with three other whack jobs, and we actually run a rehab center.

PRIEST
Sounds like honest work.

FRANKIE
Pretty rewarding actually, once you get past the smell of the disgusting fucks.

Frankie is lost in thought for a moment.

FRANKIE
But three days ago I killed a man--

PRIEST
Oh my God! But you just said...

FRANKIE
I said I don't kill for *money* anymore. I killed *this* guy for free.

PRIEST
Jesus Christ...

The Priest crosses himself again.

FRANKIE
He was actually a hitman, hired to take one of us out. But still, old habits... Am I a bad person?

No response from the Priest. Frankie looks up at the roof of the confessional.

FRANKIE
I mean, He did create us in His image. Sounds logical, doesn't it?

EXT. REHAB CENTER - DAY

Somewhere in Queens, New York. A large, run-down house, set back from the road. The lawn needs mowing. There is an old sign that reads:

HAPPY ADDICT CENTER

SUPERIMPOSE: ONE YEAR EARLIER

CHESTER, a perfectly postured and well-groomed African American (30), stands at the front door adjusting his hair.

CHESTER
 (sings quietly)
*Tomorrow will be too late, It's now
 or never, my love won't wait...*

Chester adjusts his tie and the handkerchief in the top pocket of his jacket. He opens the door and stops frozen as Frankie stands there, unimpressed, her classic scowl on her face.

CHESTER
 Oh, hello. I'm Marshal Chester.

FRANKIE
 Bring any *Cheetos*?

She turns and walks off. He doesn't like the joke.

INT. REHAB CENTER - LOUNGE - DAY

Messy place, industrial, old, in need of cleaning. Frankie, LISA (25), a chill Latina, and ALEX (40) a fit, chiseled, cocky Italian, sit in a semicircle. ROBERTO (30), Chinese, understated, paces nervously next to his own chair.

Chester sits in a chair before, them hands on knees.

CHESTER
 So, thanks to Uncle Sam--

ROBERTO
 Fuck Uncle Sam, get to the point, why we in this shithole?

CHESTER
 In order to reduce costs, the witness protection program, may, in certain situations, such as this one, allow for protected witnesses to be housed collectively.

ROBERTO

I was supposed to be on my own, not
put in some fuckin' Scout camp!

Chester ignores him.

CHESTER

As of now, until the budget situation
improves, this rehab center will be
your home, your job, and your second
chance.

ALEX

Sorry, but I ain't no doctor.

ROBERTO

I am, dude.
(flashes his
marijuana card)
I can get everyone weed for a good
price any time--for medical use, of
course.

Frankie rolls her eyes. Chester continues to ignore Roberto.
Everyone usually does.

CHESTER

This center has its own medical
staff. Your role will be to make sure
the center keeps running. If you take
this job seriously you can live well
off it. Or... you can go to jail like
you all so honestly deserve.

They all look at each other.

CHESTER

Now, feel free to all introduce
yourselves.

Frankie clears her throat.

FRANKIE

My name is Frankie. Contract killer--
or I was a contract killer.

ALEX

Shit...

FRANKIE

They put me up for a political
murder. I'm not that kinda girl, so I
found the orderer and cut a deal.

Chester looks at Roberto.

ROBERTO

I'm Roberto.

Roberto looks at Lisa like the name should impress her. She laughs at it instead. He brushes it off.

ROBERTO

I hacked the Pentagon website five times. I hate wars and guns and IEDs that rip people's faces off. My *brain* is my weapon. They call me the Che Guevara of the IT revolution.

(to Lisa)

Nice shirt.

LISA

It is.

ROBERTO

Corto Maltese?

LISA

Yup.

Chester clears his throat.

CHESTER

Alex?

Alex says nothing.

CHESTER

Go ahead.

Alex looks embarrassed to confess...

ALEX

I'm an artist.

They all look at him confused.

ROBERTO

Cut someone's ear off?

ALEX

I couldn't make a living at it so I worked as a gigolo instead.

ROBERTO

Fuck someone to death?

Alex sighs, and looks uncomfortably at the others.

ALEX

I witnessed the murder of a client of mine.

ROBERTO

Did you do her before or after the murder?

LISA

I'm Lisa.

They all shift their attention to her. Alex looks thankful.

LISA

I was just a getaway driver who picked the wrong crew. A job went bad, some good people got killed and I didn't want anything to do with that. That's it.

ROBERTO

Shit, babe, you can drive my stick any time you want.

Lisa just stares at him. Hard. Roberto instantly sweats.

ROBERTO

Just... kidding? Um...
(hashtags with fingers)
Hashtag ME TOO!

Chester sighs. Rubs his face.

CHESTER

(to himself)
My promotion can't come soon enough.

I/E. REHAB CENTER - DAY

The house has been fully renovated and is clean and shiny, inside and out.

SUPERIMPOSE: TODAY

LOUNGE

Alex, in a white coat smudged with paint, sits in an arm chair and drinks coffee thoughtfully in front of a large canvas depicting incredibly beautiful birds in flight on a blue background.

Frankie is at the table, sorting out some accounts.

FRANKIE

You really are hella talented, Alex.

Alex says nothing.

FRANKIE

I hear it's hard to make it in the art world, but you clearly have talent, so what's the deal?

ALEX

My instructor's husband was the top art agent in San Francisco. Thirty years older than her. She managed to convince him to organize an exhibition for me. But... a month before my big exhibition he caught us together in my studio. He made sure my art wouldn't be shown anywhere. Ever.

FRANKIE

Hard to feel bad for a guy who can't keep his dick out of the paint can, but everyone deserves a second chance. The old guy still alive?

ALEX

I hope not.

MARTA (35), enters. She's the head nurse, a pleasant, plump Mexican woman. But right now she is furious.

MARTA

This is too much now! Mr. Rock Star was jerking off again when I went in to give him his pills!

ALEX

Himself or someone else?

Marta frowns at the quip.

MARTA

I can't handle it. It's wrong--he is so good-looking, and has a...

Frankie does not lift her head from the papers.

FRANKIE

Unnaturally giant penis?

MARTA

How am I supposed to sleep tonight? As soon as I close my eyes all I'll see is--

FRANKIE

His unnaturally giant penis?

MARTA

Dios mio...

FRANKIE

Marta. Be happy he's not asking you to do it for him. Trust me. It's not worth it.

Alex gives Frankie a side eye.

FRANKIE

If it gets him through to Thursday, he'll be outta here and you can move on to the next pathetic excuse for a human being that comes through our doors.

Marta sighs and turns to leave.

MARTA

Speaking of... there's been no sign of Mr. Kowalski for a couple of days.

Frankie startles at the name, then pulls herself together before Alex notices.

FRANKIE

He probably changed his mind about rehab. Take him off the list.

INT. CHESTER'S OFFICE - DAY

Chester, Men's Warehouse suit on, snapping his cuffs like it's Armani, sings Elvis as he attempts some classic moves next to his desk.

The speakerphone is on and it rings a call.

CHESTER

(singing)
You look like an angel, walk like an angel, talk like an angel, but I got wise--

BOSS

(from speaker)
Hello?

Chester leans into the speaker confidently.

CHESTER

(into speaker)
Hello, sir. It's Marshal Chester.

Chester straightens his tie and arranges his hair.

BOSS

Again?

Chester shifts uneasily.

CHESTER

Sir, I... haven't called you in almost a month--

BOSS

Three weeks.

Chester pulls a face at the phone.

CHESTER

Yes, well, I'm calling you about my promotion. I feel--

BOSS

Which part of our last conversation did you not understand, Marshal?

CHESTER

Sir, due respect, you said this was a temporary assignment, but I didn't think temporary would mean over a year--

BOSS

Temporary doesn't have an end date.

CHESTER

Every other marshal I know has one, maybe two protected witnesses to take care of at most. I feel like a nursemaid over here.

BOSS

And?

CHESTER

And these idiots should be in the psych ward, not in witness protection.

(almost a whimper)

You can't even imagine what my workday is like.

He finally sits down and rubs his forehead.

BOSS

Sounds like you're the one who needs a nursemaid, crybaby. Need me to send someone over to change your fuckin' nappy?

Chester jabs both middle fingers up at the phone.

BOSS

Now keep those four assholes in check, and if you call me again in the next two months you'll be looking at a demotion.

The boss ends the call.

CHESTER

It's 'cause I'm black.

Chester looks out at the framed photo of the President on his wall. Narrows his eyes.

CHESTER

You'll see. I'll take that bullet for the President one day.

INT. REHAB CENTER - LOUNGE - DAY

Frankie is doing a crossword. Alex is painting.

Lisa is at the bar, in her own world, drinking whiskey, there is no telling how many she's had already.

Roberto is at his laptop, excitedly gesticulating at what seems to be a streaming tortoise race.

ROBERTO

Yes! Yes! YESSSS! Queen Elizabeth came in first!

Roberto jumps up, arms spread wide like he just beat Novak Djokovic at the Australian Open. Nobody shows any interest. This is obviously nothing new to them.

ROBERTO

Her Majesty Elizabeth covers fifteen yards in three minutes and six seconds on her two hundred and twenty-fifth birthday! That's *two bitcoins baby!*

Roberto begins dancing like an idiot. Alex does not interrupt his painting.

ALEX

How much is that in dollars?

ROBERTO

Twenty-seven thousand but that's not even the exciting part!

ALEX

What's exciting is you could now buy one of my paintings--it'll be worth a fortune when I'm dead.

ROBERTO

Dude, it's not about the money. My revolutionary algorithm works! Don't you see?

Roberto sits back down in front of the laptop and starts hammering away at the keyboard.

Lisa rests her chin on one hand at the bar, rather drunk, and observes the scene.

FRANKIE

If that gambling shit you're doing here gets you caught and gets the rest of us up shit creek, I'll beat your ass with a fuckin' tortoise.

Roberto continues typing furiously.

ROBERTO

Fake profile, Shanghai-based IP address, dark web masking--no chance of them catching me. And it isn't gambling, it's a scientific experiment.

LISA

And I'm Queen Elizabeth.

Marta walks in. Agitated as usual.

MARTA

Mr. Rock Star stopped jerking off but now he's walking around naked. I can't take this anymore.

ALEX

Are you falling in love with him, Marta?

MARTA

God, no, all gross and flacid like that? Just have Ms. Helga give him stronger pills. And maybe have her slip in a blue one so I don't get nightmares.

Marta starts to head out. Over her shoulder --

MARTA

Oh yeah, and someone called three times asking about Kowalski. I told them he wasn't here anymore.

ALEX

(to Frankie)
Where the hell did Kowalski go, anyway?

Frankie keeps her head buried in the crossword --

FRANKIE

I killed him.

ROBERTO

That joke gets old, Frankie.

FRANKLIN

No, seriously. He came to kill one of us.

Everyone pauses to look at each other in surprise.

FRANKIE

You're welcome, by the way.

ROBERTO

And you're gonna beat *me* with a tortoise?

INT. REHAB CENTER - GARAGE/STOREROOM - LATER

Frankie, Alex, Lisa, and Roberto are looking into an open deep freeze. Lisa lights up a cigarette.

ROBERTO

Now I know why those Russians wouldn't let me chill my vodka in their freezer!

ALEX

I'll hold his arms.

FRANKIE

Sure thing.

Frankie reaches in and pulls out a large black bag and hands it to Alex.

ALEX

What's that?

FRANKIE

His arms -- mostly. It's what you asked for. You want another bag? I've got two more.

ALEX

I'm an artist, not an undertaker.

FRANKIE

Like you never studied anatomy for class?

LISA

Are we going to do this, or just stand and talk while Kowalski thaws?

Frankie hands the second bag to Roberto and takes the third one out and puts it on the floor.

FRANKIE

Just imagine you're planting flowers. Actually, not flowers, an apple.

Lisa continues smoking indifferently, Alex and Roberto stare blankly at her.

FRANKIE

First you carefully remove the layer of grass. Then you dig a hole at least five feet deep. You put the bag--the apple--in the hole. You put the earth and the grass back, like an *artist*, huh?

(winks at Alex)

And job done.

ALEX

It'd be easier to go feed the fish.

ROBERTO

Only one small lake nearby. He'll eventually be found and probably lead back to the center.

LISA

(to Alex)

I drive, you dig.

ALEX

I don't even know what a spade looks like.

LISA

Roberto, we're outta smokes. Grocery run?

INT. STORE - DAY

Lisa is pushing a shopping cart full of food. Roberto puts four boxes of corn flakes in the basket.

LISA
What the hell?

ROBERTO
Your favorite.

LISA
I've already taken one, open your eyes.

ROBERTO
Well I like them, too.
(continues quietly)
Frankie...

He looks around furtively to make sure no-one hears.

ROBERTO
... killed this guy and now it's all gonna lead back to us. And I ain't goin' down for no murder--

Lisa speaks loudly on purpose, to annoy him.

LISA
People die every day. You know how many children in the world die of hunger every day? I don't hear you bitchin' about that, *puta*.

ROBERTO
But Kowalski didn't die of hunger.

He glances around again to make sure no-one is listening in.

ROBERTO
(quietly)
I don't do bad stuff unless it's against the system.

Lisa notices a PICKPOCKET unzipping an OLD LADY's handbag behind her back.

Lisa launches herself at the pickpocket with her shopping cart -- the cart smashes into the pickpocket and sends him sprawling in front of the old lady, the stolen wallet falling from his hand right in front of her.

The old lady looks at her wallet on the floor, and then at the pickpocket. The pickpocket's face turns to fear when he sees the look on her face.

The old lady takes the handbag off her shoulder and begins beating the pickpocket furiously with it.

Roberto looks on in confusion, then to Lisa, who offers Roberto a look of satisfaction.

LISA

Look. We're the good guys. Better?

Lisa grabs her cart and continues on. Roberto looks at her like he's in love.

ROBERTO

What a woman...

INT. REHAB CENTER - LOUNGE - DAY

Alex, Frankie, Lisa and Roberto are sitting at the dining room table finishing their evening meal. They all eat in silence until --

ROBERTO

They're gonna send us all to fuckin' Alaska to live with the penguins.

ALEX

Penguins don't live in Alaska, asshat, you're thinking Siberia.

FRANKIE

No one's gonna be living with Russians or penguins because we're gonna tell Chester--and hopefully we don't have to kill him, too.

Roberto gets up angrily.

ROBERTO

No! Out of the fuckin' question!

LISA

What's the problem? He doesn't look like much of a bleeder. And that whiny voice gets on my fuckin' nerves--

ROBERTO

For fuck's sake, it's like you two are having a *biggest moron* competition.

Alex looks at his wristwatch.

ALEX

Maybe we should have a vote or something. Chester'll be here in ten.

ROBERTO

He doesn't come in on the weekend.

ALEX

I called him.

ROBERTO

You invited him here?

ALEX

Well, yeah. 'Cause of the shitty underwear and stinky socks you leave all over the bathroom. You never clean the toilet. You never once washed a single plate after eating.

ROBERTO

Oh, you're perfect? You don't screw old ladies for cash anymore, so why do you even care about hygiene anymore--

FRANKIE

You done, *Che Guevara*?

Nobody says anything.

FRANKIE

We have to tell Chester, alright? He's a US Marshal. Sooner or later he'll figure out what happened. Plus... confessions is good for the soul.

They look at her like she's lost her mind.

ROBERTO

Then why did we get rid of the body!?

FRANKIE

That new arrival in 3B is in for bath salts. I couldn't risk him finding Kowalski and eating his face.

LISA

Good call.

ROBERTO

Fuckin' idiots.

FRANKIE

We have bigger things to worry about here. This guy was a pro. So it looks like this *safe house* isn't as safe as they made out. Either that, or some old acquaintance of ours is very good at finding protected witnesses.

Roberto looks deeply afraid.

FRANKIE

Look, if we tell him right now, we can spin it like it's actually his fault. He should have known before me about Kowalski. That's his job. He's always jabbering about that promotion he'll never get. If Kowalski got one of us it would've been the nail in Chester's career coffin.

ALEX

You are a genius.

Everybody thinks for a moment about what Frankie just said.

LISA

I'm with Frankie.

Frankie looks at Alex, waiting for an answer.

ALEX

Better than killing him.

They all look to Roberto.

ROBERTO

I didn't sign up to be an accomplice to a mur--

Roberto's eyes go wide as he sees Chester enter the room. Chester sees that he's interrupting a tense moment. They look at him in all seriousness.

CHESTER

Who died?

Roberto gulps and Chester looks at him sideways...

He then walks up to the bar, whistling an Elvis tune, takes an apple from a bowl, rubs it thoroughly with his handkerchief, and takes a bite.

The room is silent. Chester looks at them all and is suddenly nervous.

CHESTER

Shit. What did you fucking do? Did someone actually die?

ROBERTO

Fuckin' Jailhouse Rock, eh?

CHESTER
 (to himself)
 I'll never take that bullet for the
 President now.

INT. HOTEL ROOM - NIGHT

Alex and Frankie are lying in bed after sex, both looking thoughtfully up at the ceiling.

Frankie takes a puff of a joint and passes it to Alex. He has a final drag and then puts it out in the ashtray.

ALEX
 I don't feel like going to prison.
 Not my idea of a good time.

Frankie looks at the ceiling.

FRANKIE
 Chester's a pussy. He'd never put
 himself at risk for anything. He'll
 keep his mouth shut.

Alex smiles.

ALEX
 You are a master of manipulation.

FRANKIE
 Human nature is just math, nothing
 complicated about it.

Alex thinks.

ALEX
 Speaking of math... maybe we could
 turn this weekly fraction into an
 actual equation of something real--

FRANKIE
 Thursday sex.

ALEX
 I know, but--

FRANKIE
Thursday sex.

Frankie turns over onto her side and closes her eyes. Alex looks at her, sighs deeply, and stares at the ceiling.

ALEX
 Thursday sex.

INT. CATHOLIC CHURCH - CONFESSIONAL BOOTH - DAY

Chester sits nervously rubbing his hands. He adjusts his tie. Smooths down his hair. Adjusts the handkerchief in his jacket pocket.

No sooner has he relaxed when the little window opens.

INTERCUT WITH:**OTHER HALF OF the CONFESSIONAL**

THE SAME PRIEST from earlier.

PRIEST

Hello my son, confess your sin and you should be forgiven.

CHESTER

It's been a long time since I confessed, Father. Um. I lied to my mother that I was going to church regularly, and... I took part in a murder.

The Priest looks up at the ceiling of the church incredulously.

PRIEST

(under his breath)
Lord, have I wronged You in some way?

CHESTER

Sorry?

The Priest turns his attention back to Chester.

PRIEST

Who sent you here?

CHESTER

What? Nobody. I was walking and thinking--for hours. I suddenly looked around and realized I was standing in front of the church. I think the Lord Himself brought me here.

PRIEST

To punish me.

The Priest shakes his head. He cannot believe what he is hearing. Chester looks through the mesh cock-eyed.

CHESTER

What?

PRIEST

Who did you kill, son?

CHESTER

Actually, I didn't personally kill anyone. But it's *like* I did. I mean, *legally* speaking I *definitely* did, but if you ask *Him* up there then I didn't really--

The Priest peers through the little window.

PRIEST

Is this some prank? Where's the camera?

Chester is even more nervous.

CHESTER

Look, I'm a US Marshal and I'm responsible for four protected witnesses. And I'm supposed to get promoted very soon, and they've screwed it all up, and now I'll probably get demoted, and I'll never prove my daddy wrong and take a bullet for the president, and Mandy Washington'll keep trolling my Twitter and putting them stupid shit emojis in my comment feed like I'm some kind of joke just because I wouldn't go down on her while she had her--

The Priest clears his throat. Chester sighs.

CHESTER

Sorry, I'll get to the point.

PRIEST

That would be good.

CHESTER

These witnesses of mine killed a guy. I think he was a criminal of some sort, but everyone is the same in the eyes of God, right?

The Priest looks like he's just put two and two together and mouths the word: CLAIRE.

PRIEST

Oh, er, um, yes, that's right, son.

CHESTER

I think they must have buried him somewhere. They may have even cut up the--

PRIEST

You don't have to go into all the details. The Lord doesn't really need to hear all that.

Chester looks desperate.

CHESTER

The problem is if I report to the boss what happened I'll get blamed for not stopping it and I can kiss my promotion goodbye. But if I don't report it...

Chester looks up at the ceiling.

CHESTER

I don't know what *He* would think of that... up there.

INT. REHAB CENTER - LOUNGE - DAY

Roberto is sitting in the armchair. Frankie is at the bar doing a crossword. Alex is behind the bar making sandwiches. Lisa is on the couch reading a car magazine.

Chester paces irritably around the room.

ALEX

Boss, what's your problem, anyway?

Chester pauses and looks at Alex.

CHESTER

What's my problem? My problem is I should'a been out there defending my country long ago.

Roberto looks at Chester. "What are you on, dude?"

CHESTER

I was supposed to be defending this wonderful country against... communists like you.

He points at Roberto.

ALEX

He's not a communist. He's like Che Guevara.

Chester tries to come up with something else.

CHESTER

Whatever! I'm just tired of being punished with this shit assignment.

(beat)

No offense.

Lisa pushes the issue.

LISA

But what if this assignment is really a reward, and not a punishment?

ALEX

She's right. Do you know any other Marshal responsible for an entire group of protected witnesses?

Chester, angry, pretends not to hear.

CHESTER

I don't need a pep talk from criminals who all took a deal with Uncle Sam and suddenly became model citizens! I blew my chance at taking a bullet for the President--and I don't even go to church regularly anymore!

They look at him like a screw came loose. Chester pulls up a bar stool and sits in frustration.

FRANKIE

Well, we can fix the bullet part for you straight away.

Chester looks at her, a smirk on her face, and can't help but smirk himself.

CHESTER

You got a second chance and you don't even know how to use it.

ROBERTO

Hey, we're ' protected fuckin witnesses! You were supposed to take care of that Kowalski, not *us*.

Chester has no reply to that. Alex looks at Chester.

ALEX

He's correct. Play your cards right, make sure no more hitmen come in here for us, and maybe we can actually *help* you get shot for that fat baby in a suit.

(MORE)

ALEX (CONT'D)

(beat)
Whiskey?

Alex puts a glass in front of Chester, but just as he begins to pour Chester motions him to stop. Chester takes the handkerchief out of his pocket, wipes down the glass thoroughly and sets it down on the bar.

Alex finishes pouring whiskey in the glass. Chester tips it back in one gulp.

CHESTER
What're you gonna do now?

ALEX
Well, we're definitely not gonna--

Alex draws his index finger across his throat. Chester stares at him in shock. Frankie grabs Chester's attention and shoots Alex a scolding eye.

FRANKIE
It's not about what we're gonna do now, it's about what you're gonna do, Chester.

Chester looks inquiringly at Frankie.

FRANKIE
You need to find out which one of us Kowalski came to kill. Do that, maybe you finally get your promotion.

CHESTER
Easier said than done.

FRANKIE
None of us want them to find out what we've done to their man.

ALEX
And none of us like Russians.

ROBERTO
Or fuckin' penguins.

ALEX
I already told you there ain't no penguins in Alaska.

Chester looks at them in bemusement.

CHESTER
I just hope Elvis is in hell so this'll maybe be worth it.

INT. REHAB CENTER - LOUNGE - NIGHT

Frankie is at the dining table, sorting out some accounts.

Chester is sitting in the armchair, cooling his head with a glass of whiskey. He's loosened his tie and undone his shirt button.

Alex rushes in, highly agitated, and rushes up to Frankie.

ALEX

Tell me it's not true!

Frankie looks at Alex: "What the fuck's your problem?"

ALEX

Is *Judge Dredd* coming here to quit her sex addiction?

Alex paces nervously.

ALEX

This can't be happening.

FRANKIE

Hey!

Alex stops pacing.

FRANKIE

English, please.

ALEX

Judge Eleanor *Fucking* Greenwood! The nastiest bitch in New York! It says she's booked in with us next week?

FRANKIE

A Judge? She didn't mention her profession when she booked.

ALEX

Not just *any* judge. She's Judge *Fucking Dredd*.

FRANKIE

Why are you getting so worked up about it?

Alex says nothing. Frankie's eyes flash.

FRANKIE

You didn't...

ALEX

Every other Wednesday. Theater, dinner, frantic sex till morning.

Frankie laughs.

FRANKIE
Did you have facial surgery?

ALEX
Yes, just like all of you.

FRANKIE
Then don't worry. Just don't let her
peek down your pants.

Chester is holding the whiskey glass to his temple. He chimes in.

CHESTER
(deadpan)
You can run from your fate all you
like, but it will always catch up
with you in the end.

DOORBELL RINGING.

FRANKIE
(to Alex)
Go see who that is. I'm up to my
nipples in these accounts.

Alex gets up, walks past Chester, and comments in passing --

ALEX
By the way, Elvis won't be in hell.
He sang gospel.

CHESTER
Asshole...

Alex opens the door.

DETECTIVE GOODMAN (40), badge up, is standing at the door.
Alex looks like he just shit his pants.

ALEX
Can I help you?

GOODMAN
Yes. Good evening. Detective Goodman,
NYPD.

Alex forces a smile that looks like he's now trying to hold
in a shit.

GOODMAN
And you are?

ALEX
G--Gardner. Alex Gardner.

Goodman smiles.

GOODMAN
Like James Bond.

ALEX
Sorry?

GOODMAN
You said your surname first, then
your name and surname together.

ALEX
I didn't notice.

GOODMAN
You work here?

ALEX
No. Actually, yes. But... not by
myself.

Goodman nods.

GOODMAN
Can I come in?

ALEX
I need to think.

Alex says nothing and stares at the detective. The detective looks at him in confusion.

ALEX
I'd better call my colleagues.

Alex slowly closes the door and walks through the lounge as though hypnotized.

ALEX
(to Chester)
I think you should go to the door.
It's a detective.

Chester's headache passes instantly. He puts down the glass, buttons up his shirt, and fixes his tie. He heads for the door, adjusting his hair as he goes.

Alex calls after him ironically.

ALEX
If it starts going south, sing him
Love Me Tender. Always brings down
the house.

Chester opens the door to a confused Goodman.

GOODMAN

Hey there, Detective Goodman, NYPD.
You are?

CHESTER

Chester. US Marshal. I... volunteer
here. *Head* volunteer. Wife makes me
do it. Nothing like hanging around a
house of fiends and freaks to keep
the wife happy. Happy wife, happy
life, am I right?

Chester offers an odd smile. Goodman looks at him strangely.

GOODMAN

Yeah... well some human body parts
have been found in a trash bin just
down the block. Have you noticed any
unusual activity the last few days?

Chester looks like he's about to vomit all over Detective
Goodman. And his mouth begins to open as --

FADE OUT