

CINE CITY

A-list actor, Bobby Richards hires a second-rate film producer with a gambling problem to make an art film that's guaranteed to lose money. Richards signs over his rights to the film to his wife in a spiteful attempt to make sure she doesn't get a dime out of their nasty divorce battle, but things don't work out exactly as planned.

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CINE CITY

The Wife

EXT. BEVERLY HILL, CALIFORNIA - DAY

FADE IN

TERRY RICHARDS, an attractive thirty something woman, dressed elegantly, sits in the back of an airport limousine as it pulls into the circular driveway of an exclusive Beverly Hills mansion, home of BOBBY and TERRY RICHARDS. TERRY pays the driver plus a generous tip.

DRIVER

Thank you very much MRS.
RICHARDS. Tell your husband I
really enjoyed his last movie.

TERRY

You're sweet, but my husband
doesn't need anyone inflating
his already oversized ego.

TERRY gets out of the car and enters the house.

INT. HOME OF BOBBY AND TERRY RICHARDS - DAY

A very nervous maid rushes to the door to take TERRY'S
suitcase and coat.

TERRY

Is something wrong MARIA? You
look pale. Are you sick?

MARIA

No MRS. RICHARDS...

TERRY

Well if everything's okay,
please fix me some lunch. I just
couldn't eat the swill they
served on the plane.

TERRY starts to go up the elegant winding staircase.

MARIA

Why don't you come in the
kitchen you must starved...

TERRY

I just want to clean up and get changed first.

TERRY continues up the stairs.

MARIA

I don't think you should go up there MRS. RICHARDS...

TERRY stops in her tracks and gives MARIA a hard look.

TERRY

That son-of-a-bitch is here, isn't he? Who's he with... that AUSSIE SLUT he's been banging?

TERRY marches up the remainder of the stairs, down the hall to the double doors of her bedroom. She stops to catch her breath and compose herself. She straightens her elegant designer dress, and opens the door. The AUSSIE SLUT is sitting atop her husband riding him like Red Pollard whipping home Seabiscuit to victory.

TERRY

Jesus fucking Christ... you couldn't just fuck her in an alley somewhere, you had to do in our bed.

The AUSSIE SLUT jumps off BOBBY RICHARDS while in mid moan. She starts grabbing her clothes as BOBBY RICHARDS causally sits up in bed. He reaches for an e-cig on the bedside table, takes a big drag, and blows out a series of well-formed vapour rings.

BOBBY

Jesus, TERRY, don't be so dramatic. Couldn't you have waited till we were finished?

TERRY looks at her husband with utter contempt. The bile in her stomach starts to rise into her mouth. She looks at the AUSSIE SLUT who is struggling to get into her clothes. TERRY shakes her head in disgust. Her gaze returns to her husband.

TERRY

You're such a fucking asshole,
BOBBY, I mean this time you've
gone too far. In our own bed for
god's sake. I'm filing for
divorce, and when I'm finished,
you'll be lucky if you can get a
job doing summer stock in butt-
fuck-nowhere.

TERRY turns her head and calls.

TERRY

MARIA! Where the fuck's my
lunch?

FADE OUT

The Thug

INT. THE BASEMENT OF THE EL DESNUDO STRIP CLUB - NIGHT

TUCO JANNARO looms over a bruised and bleeding JOEY WATKINS slumped in a rickety wooden chair stained in blood. The man's hands are tied together behind his back. TUCO is dressed in a black Silk Shantung suit, cut in the trim Savile Row style over an open neck custom-made Egyptian cotton shirt. On either side of TUCO are large tough looking men standing silently waiting for instructions.

TUCO

See this suit... Silk Shantung.
Made by one of those highfalutin
English Savile Row snobs, but
hay... they make one fucking fine
suit.

So here's a fun fact for you to
impress your friends with the
next time you're at one of those
fancy Hollywood parties.

One of the thugs interrupts TUCO'S story.

RUDDY

I don't think this *cabron* will
be relating any fun facts to
anybody, any time soon.

TUCO

RUDDY, please, don't interrupt.
Our friend here needs some
sartorial advice. This
information could come in handy
if he ever wants to upgrade from
those cheap knock-off rags he
wears.

RUDDY

Yeah he'll need something nice
when they lay him out in one of
those cheap pine boxes.

The other thug smirks his approval of the comment.

TUCO

So where was I? Oh yes, Silk Shantung... this here fabric, my friend, comes from Shandong China, now you got to understand most of the crap people buy comes from China, but that stuff is shit. I'm talking real *basura*. But this here Silk Shantung... it's the real deal; them old time Chinese potentates used to wear this shit before the Commie assholes put everybody in sack-cloth.

Now you wear this type of fabric you can't be hanging out in basements beating the crap out of assholes that don't pay their debts. You just can't do it... cause this kind of fabric wrinkles like crazy.

I mean if you spend thousands of dollars having some stuck-up British queer shove his hand up your crotch so you get that Daniel Craig silhouette, you don't want to look like you just got up from a three day knap using your fucking Silk Shantung suit for PJs.

And that my friend, that's exactly what you've done to me. You've made me look like I just got out of bed wearing my very expansive, imported, custom-made Silk Shantung suit.

Now you can understand why the fuck I'm so angry.

I suppose I'll just have to send the suit out to be dry-cleaned. Now maybe that thief who runs the sweat shop on Main ruins my suit; or maybe he loses it; or maybe he sells it to some schmuck looking for the Mercedes Benz of suits at a Yugo price.

So let's recap: not only do you owe me one shit pile of dough, you've caused me the indignity of wrinkling my beautiful black British-made Silk Shantung suite, made from the finest fabric straight off the boat from Shandong Province. And that upsets me no end. And you, my friend, don't want to do that, do you?

JOEY groans an unintelligible answer.

TUCO

What did you say? I didn't fucking hear you.

FADE OUT

Joey The Producer

INT. THE OFFICES OF JW FILM PRODUCTION - DAY

JOEY gets off the elevator looking like he just went ten round with Mohammed Ali. He walks gingerly down the corridor to his seedy office. He opens the half frosted-glass door with JW Film Productions hand-lettered in black Bank Gothic on the glass. Sitting behind an old wooden office desk is the beautiful and perpetually cheery JEANIE PHILLIPS, his loyal and loving, girl-everything.

JEANIE

Oh my god, JOEY! Did TUCO do that?

JOEY

It's no big deal honey, no big deal...

JEANIE

I'll get you some ice.

JOEY

Yeah ice... but add a lot of Scotch.

JEANIE

Jesus JOEY, it's 10 AM.

JOEY

So?

JEANIE

You don't want to be smashed when BOBBY RICHARDS arrives.

JOEY

BOBBY RICHARDS? What are you talking about?

JEANIE

He called 9:00 AM sharp, demanded a meeting this morning. I told him you might be late, but he insisted. He'll be here any minute.

JOEY

Don't screw around JEANIE. I'm not in the mood.

JEANIE

No joke, JOEY. Go get cleaned up. You look like shit.

JOEY

You're serious? BOBBY RICHARDS is coming here?

JEANIE nods her head and smiles.

JOEY

I wonder what he wants?

JEANIE

Could be your big break.

A diffused figure appears on the other side of the glass door. There's a tentative knock. The door opens and BOBBY RICHARDS, hotshot film star, pokes his head around the door.

BOBBY

Is this JOEY WATKINS' office?

JOEY

MR. RICHARDS please come in...

BOBBY gives JEANIE an appreciative look, lingering his gaze on her generous cleavage. He returns his gaze to JOEY.

BOBBY

What the hell happened to you?

JOEY

It's nothing just a minor fender-bender on the way in this morning.

BOBBY

Look, I really need your help with a project. Is there somewhere we can talk?

JOEY

Lets go in my office where we
can relax. JEANIE, get MR.
RICHARDS an espresso, or
whatever he wants.

BOBBY'S gaze returns to JEANIE, as his mind toys with what
she could provide that he would want. JOEY interrupts his
gaze..

JOEY

This way MR.RICHARDS...

FADE OUT

The Deal

INT. THE PRIVATE OFFICE OF JOEY WATKINS - DAY

JOEY ushers BOBBY into his cluttered shabby office. The walls are covered in posters of cheap screamer flicks. His desk is piled high with dog-eared scripts and headshots of attractive actresses. JOEY scurries around the office tidying up piles of debris from late nights working on his latest B-grade project. He picks up several recent issues of *Variety*, a few old *Racing Forms*, and a pizza box with pieces of gnarled crust protruding. He tosses everything into a waste paper basket.

JOEY settles into a worn leather chair that resides behind his desk, while BOBBY tries to find a clean spot to sit. He chooses one of the two wooden straight-back chairs across from JOEY. JEANIE places a steaming espresso on the desk in front of BOBBY giving him an enticing view of her well-rounded assets.

JOEY

Well it's certainly a pleasure to meet you BOBBY, I can call you BOBBY can't I? After all, I feel like I know you so well after seeing all your films. That last one, *The Warrior Peasant* was a humdinger. I didn't know you could blow that much shit up in ninety minutes...

JOEY prattles on until BOBBY interrupts him.

BOBBY

Actually that's why I'm here. These big blockbuster action movies are all the same and there's little or no acting involved. The studio won't even let me do my own stunts in case I get hurt. Where's the artistic merit in that?

JOEY

Yeah but it's cool and you're making a lot of dough.

BOBBY

Sure, sure it's profitable but I need a change. The next new hotshot is just around the corner, and then I'll be yesterday's news... now's the time for something new, something different. Like Bob Dylan in reverse: electric to acoustic, if you catch my drift.

JOEY

Of course that makes sense, but BOBBY, are you sure... you're at the top of your game. Besides, let's face it, at your stage, you could go to the big boys and they'd welcome you with open arms.

BOBBY

Maybe... maybe, but even if they did, they'd want me to produce one of those big budget projects; and they'd demand I act in it... that's not what I want, and that's why I came to you.

JOEY is dumbstruck, but he's smart enough to keep his mouth shut and listen. JEANIE is carefully taking notes in the corner sitting on a cracked brown leather sofa littered with files and scripts.

BOBBY

I want to start small, low budget but quality you understand... It's all about the experience. See if producing is really for me.

JOEY

Sure BOBBY I get it. Test the waters sort of thing. Make sure it's what you really want. Things don't go right, you go straight back to the blockbusters... no harm, no foul.

BOBBY

I'm willing to have my lawyer send you a check today if you're willing to make a movie with meaning, something with soul... something with integrity.

JOEY

And you'll star in it?

BOBBY

Hell no. I don't even want a producing credit. In fact I insist not having anything to do with the movie, and definitely no credits. I just want to make art, give something back in return for all my success. You can understand that can't you?

JOEY

BOBBY, are you sure about this?

BOBBY turns his head towards JEANIE, his eyes focusing on the sweet spot between the exposed portions of the two rounded mounds protruding from her dress.

BOBBY

Sure as MISS JEANIE has the prettiest blue eyes in Hollywood.

JEANIE blushes.

JOEY

What kind of split we looking at?

BOBBY

Fifty-fifty, I think that's fair, after all, you're doing all the work. I'm just putting up the cash. But you got to move fast. I want this thing in production. Have you got a script?

JOEY

Sure, sure, I got lots of scripts. In fact I know the perfect one.

JOEY hasn't a clue what script to promote. Most of the stuff he gets is crap. He desperately looks over at JEANIE who's frantically shuffling through a pile of scripts. She finds what she's looking for at the bottom of the pile, pulls it out, and holds it up for JOEY to see.

Joey remembers the script, *The Dead Eye Dick*. It's horrible. It makes no sense, and the plot's got so many holes in it, the screenwriter should have called it *The Swiss Cheese Dick*.

JOEY

That's it, that's the one, *The Dead Eye Dick*! It's a real hidden treasure, a gem of a script... it's a mystery but with soul, real sensitive shit. You want to read it?

BOBBY

Nah, I trust your judgement, that's why I'm here. You're the professional. I'm just the money.

The Dead Eye Dick, yeah, that'll work.

JOEY

JEANIE, what's the writer's name, Kandinsky... like the artist, something like that...

JEANIE

It's BELINSKY like the old ball player.

JOEY

That's it... BELINSKY, JAKE
BELINSKY... Get him in here and
sign him up. We'll start work
right away. Maybe get him to do
a polish, you know, pump up the
arty side a little. We'll Paddy
Chayefsky the shit out of this
baby...

Hay what you think... we'll shoot
in black and white, high
contrast, goofy angles and
stuff... old school Film Noir...
Kinda Orson Wells meets Francois
Truffaut. We'll make it so
fucking arty people will want to
put a frame around it and hang
it on the wall.

BOBBY

Sure, sure, whatever you think,
just get it in the works fast.
My lawyer will send over the
contracts this afternoon.

FADE OUT

The Screenwriter

EXT. VENICE BEACH, JOEY AND JEANIE IN HIS CAR - DAY

JOEY and JEANIE in his restored Karmann Ghia pull up in front of Kasha's Kitchen and Bikini Boutique, an orange painted two-story Venice Beach local hangout. The joint somehow combines a diner experience with the sale of brightly colored swimwear presented by skimpily clad waitresses serving such delicacies as all day breakfasts and muffins the size of small pepperoni pizzas. JOEY is on his cell phone with TUCO.

JOEY

TUCO I got your money. I'll drop it off tonight at the club. Listen, what are the odds on the GONZALES fight?

Really... GONZALES is that much of a dog. What time's the fight... 9:30? Okay, double me up on GONZALES.

Don't worry about it. I'm not interested in another visit to your basement.

I said I got the money. I'll be there, 9:00 PM. Save me a table. I think that money I owe you will be coming right back to me by the time that fight is over.

Yeah, yeah... don't you worry, I just came into some heavy dough.

JOEY hangs up.

JEANIE

JOEY what are you doing? You need that money for the movie.

JOEY

Don't fret baby, the CHAMP is finished. He's been hit in the head so many times he needs a compass to find the center of the ring. Besides, GONZALES is under-rated. He's bigger, faster, younger, and smarter than the CHAMP.

JEANIE

But Joey it's not your money. If you blow it, what the hell are you going to tell RICHARDS?

JOEY

It's okay. Don't worry, I'm not betting all of it, just enough to get us some nice new digs, and maybe a little vacation in Europe or someplace.

Hay I win that bet maybe we go to Cannes and mingle with the fat cats. This is our big break, honey. Things are turning our way. Come on let's sign up that hack writer, and get the ball rolling.

JEANIE

I don't know JOEY, you blow this deal and I've got rethink our relationship..

JOEY

JEANIE honey, I got it covered. Stop worrying, you'll give yourself an ulcer.

Now... you sure this is the address. It's a diner I think, or maybe a boutique? I don't know what the hell it is. Are you sure this the right place?

JEANIE

This is the address on the script, and it's the same address JAKE gave me over the phone.

They park the car and enter Kasha's Kitchen and Bikini Boutique

INT. KASHA'S KITCHEN AND BIKINI BOUTIQUE - DAY

Very attractive waitresses wearing colorful skimpy bikinis scurry around the busy restaurant delivering fancy omelettes and four-digit calorie-count muffins.

An aging female hippy dressed in jeans and a *Strawberry Alarm Clock* tank top approaches them from behind a counter while *Incense and Peppermints* plays over the sound system.

The hippie proprietor may have a few wrinkles but she's got the body of a twenty-year old and the face of a retired super model. Her best days may be behind her, but she's still miles head of most of her generation, a demographic that has long since gone to seed.

KASHA

Hi I'm KASHA, I'm afraid there'll be a bit of a wait. Today's Half-Price Muffin Day so the place is packed.

JOEY

Actually we're looking for JAKE BELINSKY. He said this was his office.

KASHA reaches for a small fuzzyheaded mallet hung over a medium sized Chinese Gong that stands on the counter. She strikes the gong once causing the patrons to all cheer, some even stand to applaud.

JOEY and JEANIE just look on in amazement. Out from the back comes a forty something man in dark Roy Orbison glasses, a black long sleeve shirt, and black trousers all covered in what looks like flour, at least that's what JEANIE hopes it is.

In unison the packed restaurant crowd including the bikini clad waitresses all start to chant.

CROWD
Muffin Man! Muffin Man! We all
love the Muffin Man!

JAKE raises his arms to his side and bows gracefully acknowledging the epicurean adoration of the crowd. He motions with his hands for the crowd to sit. They obey.

KASHA
They all like their muffins...

JAKE slowly makes his way to the front where KASHA, JOEY, and JEANIE are standing. KASHA kisses JAKE on the cheek in what is obviously a *he's mine* display for JEANIE'S sake.

KASHA
JAKE baby, these people asked
for you.

JAKE
You WATKINS and PHILLIPS?

JOEY and JEANIE nod. KASHA returns to her duties manning the cash register.

JOEY
Is there somewhere we can talk?

JAKE sprinkles white powder like pixie dust all over JOEY'S leather jacket and JEANIE'S abundant cleavage as he gestures to a corner table marked staff.

They make there way to the table and cram in tight with JEANIE sandwiched between JOEY and JAKE. KASHA arrives with two mugs of hot coffee and two humongous sized muffins. JAKE puts his hand on JEANIE'S thigh under the table...

JAKE
Try the muffin gorgeous, they're
one of my specialities. Each one
packs a bit of a surprise.

JEANIE ignores the muffin but digs the spike of her high-heel into JAKES black calfskin cowboy boots. He doesn't flinch but he does remove his hand.

JOEY

So down to business.

The meeting continues with some talk about JAKE tightening up the script and moving a few things around to try and plug some of the holes in the plot. The meeting ends with JOEY giving JAKE a cheque and JAKE promising to deliver the revised script in a week.

FADE OUT

The Lawyers

INT. THE BOARDROOM OF NICK SCURILLA, DIVORCE LAWYER - DAY

TERRY and BOBBY RICHARDS face each other across a large boardroom table at the upscale Wilshire Boulevard offices of Divorce Lawyer, NICK SCURILLA. TERRY'S lawyer, SCURILLA, is the leading divorce lawyer for disgruntled Hollywood wives.

SCURILLA wipes invisible lint off his ultra expensive midnight blue custom-made chalk-stripped suit. He looks dapper in his imported red silk tie and black Italian Gucci loafers. He lounges casually beside TERRY RICHARDS fussing with his gold ROLEX watch.

Across the table is BOBBY RICHARDS, smug and confident. Beside him is his showbiz lawyer MANNY SHARPE who watches his opponent with amusement.

If NICK SCURILLA is the primping venomous Lionfish of divorce lawyers flashing his showy tentacles in an arrogant display power, then MANNY SHARPE is the ugly, lumpy Stonefish, indistinguishable from a rock, but even more deadly than his ostentatious adversary. SHARPE'S suit may be as expensive as SCURILLA'S but on SHARPE it looks like a wrinkled thrift shop special.

SCURILLA

That brings us to the community
property: the house,
investments, and cash assets.

SHARPE pulls a piece of paper out of a manila folder that resides in a well-worn brown leather attaché case. He pushes the paper across the table toward SCURILLA. SCURILLA looks down at the piece of paper and slides it over for TERRY to see.

SCURILLA

What are you guys trying to pull? According to this the house is mortgaged to the hilt; the cash in the bank hardly covers monthly expenses; and the only other asset is this investment in some movie property: *The Dead Eye Dick*?

SHARPE

That's it. That's all there is. BOBBY and TERRY have been living the good life for a long time, and money only goes so far when you live like that.

TERRY

That's bullshit, BOBBY! You got more money than Midas. Where the hell have you stashed it?

SCURILLA puts his well-manicured hand on top of TERRY'S to calm her down a bit.

BOBBY

That's it baby. That's all there is. Exotic cars, first class weekend trips to Paris to pick up a few things, designer dresses, it all adds up.

TERRY start's to take the bait but again SCURILLA intercedes before she can speak.

SCURILLA

So what's the deal with this movie investment? Since when do you produce your own movies?

MANNY

BOBBY'S not getting any younger. It's time he looks to the future. He can't be doing all these action movies forever. *The Dead Eye Dick* is a way to diversify.

SCURILLA

This isn't going to fly, MANNY.
You guys are going to have to do
better.

MANNY

Look NICK you can't get blood
from a stone...

SCURILLA

That's what you think...

TERRY

You're a son-of-bitch BOBBY...
after all these years this is
how you want to end things.
You're the one who slept around.
I've been a good wife,

BOBBY

You're right honey, I'm the
bastard, I admit it...

MANNY

BOBBY will you keep quiet and
let me handle this...

SCURILLA

Let the man talk.

BOBBY

It's okay MANNY. I want to do
this. TERRY is right. She's been
a good wife. I'm the villain
here.

MANNY

You're doing this against my
advice!

SCURILLA

BOBBY you got something to say,
now's the time to say it, or
else we'll see you court.

BOBBY

I'm willing to give up my share
of *The Dead Eye Dick* project.
TERRY can have the whole thing.
Forget community property. I
just want to be fair.

TERRY

You're really willing to turn it
all over? No strings?

BOBBY

No strings Baby, You can have
the whole enchilada. I'll tell
you this: it's a winner, a real
gem: a fucking hidden treasure.
It'll make a shit pile of dough.
You'll be set for life.

FADE OUT

The Bet

INT. THE EL DESNUDO STRIP CLUB - NIGHT

JOEY enters the Desnudo Strip Club at the appointed time. He's more than a bit nervous carrying a Hello Kitty backpack filled with fifty thousand dollars in a room full of wise guys and strippers.

The room gives off an eerie glow from the reflection of pink, mauve, and blue neon lights that bounce off every shiny surface. Most of the dancers and waitresses are nude except for g-strings that cover very little and do-me heels that threaten to give the girls nosebleeds.

A friendly pole dancer hanging upside down notices JOEY'S backpack as he passes...

POLE DANCER

Love the knapsack... What's a matter JOEY? You brought your own dinner? Don't you trust TUCO'S food?

JOEY smiles a nervous smile as he continues to makes his way through the crowded club to a room in the back reserved for VIPs. The room is filled with TUCO'S cronies, his best customers, and the prettiest girls the club has to offer.

The women are making sure all the men are spending money drinking and having a good time as they watch the last of the preliminary fights on a sixty inch flat screen television. TUCO, his bodyguards, and two dancers are at a cubicle in the back.

TUCO

Hay... look who's here, right on time for a change. And look what he's brought... now isn't that the cutest thing you've ever seen.

The bodyguards and dancers all laugh.

JOEY

I think you going to like it.

JOEY drops the backpack on the round black table littered with various half empty glasses of booze and various bottles of expensive vodka and champagne. TUCO looks at the backpack and smiles. He leans forward and slides open the zipper a few inches to peek in side. He closes the zipper and tosses the bag to one of his bodyguards.

TUCO

Have LENNY count it, just to make sure nothing accidentally on purpose slipped out a hole in Miss Kitty's bottom.

TUCO gestures to JOEY to sit down beside one of the dancers who cuddles up close beside him placing a glass of champagne in his hand.

The room quiets-down as the main event is about to start. The boxers are introduced and the bell rings to start round one. GONZALES comes out swinging. He's all over the aging CHAMP. GONZALES backs the CHAMP into the ropes with a flurry of lefts and rights followed by a vicious upper cut that all but puts the CHAMP out but the ropes manage to hold him up. Everyone in the room and at the fight are on their feet yelling and screaming at the CHAMP to fight back.

The referee gives the CHAMP a standing eight count. Blood trickles down the side of his face. The CHAMP nods he's okay to continue. The ref orders the fighters back to the center of the ring.

GONZALES comes on hard again with another flurry of punches staggering the CHAMP again. GONZALES knows the CHAMP is finished; a cut has opened over his other eye, and blood flows freely down his cheek.

GONZALES backs off, savouring his moment in the spotlight. He dances around the ring in celebration, but the CHAMP is still standing. Waiting.

GONZALES gears up to finish off his opponent. He comes at the CHAMP just like before with a battery of lefts and rights to be followed by an final uppercut kill shot, but this time the CHAMP is ready for him.

As GONZALES winds up for the final blow he sees the CHAMPS left hand coming straight at his head. That's the last thing GONZALES remembers until he wakes up in the dressing room ten minutes later.

TUCO is bent over laughing his ass off. JOEY is dumbfounded. TUCO still laughing turns to JOEY.

TUCO

Well I hope Kitty's got another package ready for me..

JOEY doesn't say a word. He just gets up and leaves with the sound of TUCO and his crew still laughing.

TUCO

Tomorrow JOEY... I want that package tomorrow, or it's back to the basement we go.

FADE OUT

TUCO'S OFFER

INT. THE OFFICES OF JW FILM PRODUCTION - DAY

A month has past and JOEY has continued to loose money to TUCO. JOEY is running short of the funds needed to produce the movie.

JOEY, nervous and fidgety, sits behind his desk staring at TUCO who's seated in one of the straight back chairs across from him. RUDDY stands behind him, arms crossed.

JEANIE stands off to the side clutching a stuffed Betty Boop backpack. TUCO looks at JEANIE and what she's holding.

TUCO

What's a matter? You ran out of Hello Kitties?

Never was much of a cat person myself... more of a dog man I guess.

Actually I prefer Betty Boop anyway if you really want to know. She's sexy... isn't that right RUDDY.

RUDDY

Yah boss, she's sexy. She has that *je ne c'est quo* thing going on.

JOEY looks at JEANIE

TUCO

See honey, we really are a classy operation. Even the help knows French shit like that.

JOEY

JEANIE, give TUCO the bag.

JEANIE hands RUDDY the bag. RUDDY peeks inside to make sure it's stuffed with money, and not just old newspapers.

TUCO

JOEY... you know I like you, otherwise RUDDY wouldn't have been so gentle with your late payment penalties. Besides, for the last month or so, you've been paying up pretty regular. But really JOEY... you should get a new hobby cause gambling is just not your thing.

Maybe you should be concentrating on that new BOBBY RICHARDS movie you've been working on.

JOEY

How'd you hear about that?

TUCO

Oh... I hear things. Word gets around about stuff like that. Maybe I'd be interested in a piece of the action. Say you turn over your interest in the BOBBY RICHARD'S flick and I forgive the rest of the money you owe me.

JOEY

Trust me TUCO, you don't want any part of this dog. It's a loser TUCO. Believe me.

TUCO

Who you trying to kid, JOEY? BOBBY RICHARD'S movies always make money, big money.

JOEY

Yah but this isn't really a BOBBY RICHARDS movie. You see it's...

TUCO

Cut the crap JOEY, the more you object the more I know this movie's a winner.

JOEY

TUCO please, you got to...

TUCO

You think about it JOEY. I figure a few more bets and you really won't have much of a choice anyway. It's either the movie, the money, or...

TUCO turns and looks at JEANIE, practically salivating all over his Silk Shantung suit.

TUCO

... it's the beautiful MISS JEANIE PHILLIPS, your choice JOEY.

TUCO gets up, and straightens his suit.

TUCO

Fucking SILK SHANTUNG shit, wrinkles like an old whore on crack. Next time I go for a nice light weight Italian wool, maybe Zegna.

This Chinese shit always looks like you slept in it.

You be good JOEY and think about what I said. And take good care of MISS JEANIE cause I got a feeling we'll be seeing a lot of one another.

TUCO and RUDDY leave JOEY'S office.

Sitting in the reception area is an attractive middle-aged hippie chick with the body of a Victoria Secret model and a forty something man in dark glasses, a black long sleeve shirt, and black trousers speckled with the remnants of white power.

TUCO notices the couple waiting, paying special attention to the white substance on the Jonny Cash wannabe. TUCO elbows RUDDY as they leave...

TUCO

I think I know how JOEY is
financing is hobby..

JEANIE comes out of JOEY'S office. She sees BELINSKY and
KASHA and waves them into the inner office.

INT. JOEY'S OFFICE - DAY

JOEY, JEANIE, BELINSKY, and KASHA are discussing production
issues.

JOEY

Listen JAKE I know how much you
want this movie to get made but
we're running out of money. We
got a cast of nobodies and a
director that just got out of
rehab, and we still don't have
enough dough. We can't even
afford food service.

BELINSKY looks at KASHA sitting beside him; she touches his
hand gently and nods.

BELINSKY

Don't you worry about food
service Daddy-o... dough is my
specialty. KASHA and I will
provide everything you need: all
day breakfasts and muffins for
everyone.

JEANIE

Well they say breakfast is the
most important meal of the day.

JOEY

Yah, and I like muffins.

KASHA

If you like muffins, you're
going to fucking love JAKE'S.

FADE OUT

A Offer He Can't Refuse

INT. THE EL DESNUDO VIP ROOM - NIGHT

JOEY sits in a black leather chair in the El Desnudo VIP Room. RUDDY stands at the entrance of the room blocking anyone from entering or leaving.

TUCO lounges on a black leather curved sectional with two of his most attractive dancers, one on either side. He causally cleans his fingernails with a razor sharp Bulldog tactical knife. The pink, mauve, and blue neon lights envelop the room like a surreal translucent shroud.

TUCO

You brought the rest of the money?

JOEY

I'm a little strapped for cash right now. You know how it is with this BOBBY RICHARD'S movie and all.

TUCO

Sure JOEY I know how it is: once a deadbeat, always a deadbeat. And you were doing so well... paying up like a bitch in need of a fix.

JOEY

You got to understand TUCO, everybody on set needs to get paid or they'll walk, and then we're both shit-out-of-luck.

TUCO

Yah JOEY, I get it. Everybody wants to get paid including me. The difference is, none of your dopey actors have a RUDDY.

JOEY

You'll get your money. Don't I always pay up?

TUCO

Why don't you hit up RICHARDS
for some more dough?

JOEY

I already tried, no chance.

TUCO

Well that does narrow your
options a bit.

RUDDY moves away from the door and comes up behind JOEY;
close enough that JOEY can smell the garlic from the
meatball grinder RUDDY had for lunch. Joey turns his head
slightly to see where RUDDY is standing.

JOEY

Don't worry TUCO. I'll get your
money.

TUCO

Oh, don't misunderstand my
friend, I'm not worried... not
worried one bit.

RUDDY puts a giant bear-sized paw on JOEY'S shoulder.
RUDDY'S fingers dig deep into JOEY'S clavicle causing him
to wince in pain.

TUCO

I'm not worried because you got
options: you can pay me my
money, you can deliver MISS
JEANIE PHILLIPS on a platter, or
you can sign over your interest
in that BOBBY RICHARD'S movie.

RUDDY'S fingers loosen their grip for an instant, but
before JOEY can catch his breath, RUDDY'S arm wraps around
his neck lifting him six inches off the chair. JOEY can't
breathe.

TUCO untangles himself from the two women draped all over
him. He gets up from the sectional still holding the
Bulldog tactical knife in his right hand.

RUDDY still has JOEY in a modified sleeper hold. TUCO takes the sharp end of the Bulldog and touches it to JOEY'S forehead just hard enough to leave a red mark.

TUCO

You know I like you JOEY, you know, because if you were anybody else, we wouldn't be talking about options.

Now I like my Betty Boops, and even my Hello Kitties, but today you show up with no bags at all. So JOEY my friend, if you were anybody else, the only bags we'd be talking about would be body bags.

As TUCO talks he runs the Bulldog down JOEY'S forehead, between his eyes, and down his nose leaving a thin red track.

When TUCO reaches the end of JOEY'S nose with the Bulldog, he places the sharp end of the knife in JOEY'S right nostril.

TUCO

You ever see *Chinatown*, JOEY? Great fucking movie. There's this scene were Roman Polanski threatens Jack Nicholson; I love that scene. You know the scene I'm talking about, don't you JOEY?

JOEY nods as best he can under the grip of RUDDY'S arm.

TUCO

So JOEY... what's it going to be: Betty Boop, JEANIE PHILLIPS, or BOBBY RICHARDS?

JOEY tries to speak but can't. TUCO signals RUDDY to let JOEY go.

JOEY

I'll send over the BOBBY
RICHARD'S contracts this
afternoon.

TUCO

I knew we could come to an
equitable arrangement, after
all, that's what friends do.
Right JOEY?

FADE OUT

Magic Muffins

I Love The Smell Of Muffins In The Morning

INT. ON THE SET OF THE DEAD EYE DICK - DAY

The scene takes place in a church. High wattage Redhead and Blonde movie lights, microphones on long boom arms, and an assortment of other equipment and technicians litter the sanctuary. JOEY, JEANIE, and BELINSKY watch from a balcony high above the sanctuary floor. Everyone on set is stoned.

The actor playing the HERO is dressed in a drench coat, Borsalino fedora, and a black eye patch. He stands inside the church doors looking down the long isle to where another actor dressed as a PRIEST waits holding a cardboard box.

The DIRECTOR is passed-out in a director's chair at the back of the church. Remnants of a BELINSKY muffin encircle the chair like a satanic warning to keep away.

A snoring alcoholic BUM sleeps in a pew only a few feet from where the PRIEST is standing. No one has bothered to remove him from the shot.

JOEY

What the hell? Isn't anybody going to get rid of that BUM?

JEANIE

Everybody looks stoned.

JOEY

What did you put in those muffins?

BELINSKY

It's my special formula, straight out of the Alice B Toklas cookbook.

JOEY

Jesus Christ! They are high!

The ASSISTANT DIRECTOR, a kid that looks twelve but is actually twenty-five and a recent dropout from film school, has taken charge. He stands behind the CAMERAMAN barking orders while waving one of BELINSKY'S muffins around in the air, periodically taking a bite.

ASSISTANT DIRECTOR

ACTION!

The HERO walks slowly down the isle towards the PRIEST in what is supposed to be the climatic scene of the movie. The CAMERAMAN, wrapped in a Steadicam rig, follows the HERO as he walks. The ASSISTANT DIRECTOR follows closely behind nibbling on his muffin dribbling crumbs all over the shoulder of the CAMERAMAN.

The HERO looks the PRIEST in the eye for a long dramatic moment. He glances meaningfully down at the box the PRIEST is holding, and then up into the PRIEST'S eyes.

HERO

Is that the murder weapon?

At that moment the BUM stumbles to his feet and stretches broadly, making a loud yawning sound. Everyone turns to look. The BUM stumbles over to where the PRIEST is standing with the box. He opens the box and sees two of BELINSKY'S magic muffins.

BUM

I love the smell of muffins in
the morning!

He takes one of the muffins out of the box and takes a giant bite scattering crumbs all over the PRIEST'S black costume. Everyone on the set just stares; the CAMERMAN is mesmerized still filming the bizarre scene.

BUM

Smells like victory..

The BUM reaches into his dirty overcoat with his free hand while he takes a final huge bite of muffin. He pulls out a bottle of cheap wine, unscrews the cap and takes a long swig.

He wipes his mouth with the sleeve of his filthy coat. He belches loud enough for the Vatican to take notice.

BUM

BELCH!

He looks back into the box eyeing the last lonely muffin.
He picks it up and sticks it into one of the pockets of his
filthy overcoat.

ASSISTANT DIRECTOR

CUT! That's a wrap.

JOEY turns to JEANIE

JOEY

TUCO is going to kill me.

FADE OUT

The Private Screening

INT. SCREENING ROOM IN TERRY RICHARD'S HOME - NIGHT

JOEY, JEANIE, TERRY RICHARDS, and TUCO sit in a darkened screening room at TERRY RICHARDS home. The end of *The Dead Eye Dick* is playing on the screen in front of them...

BUM

*I love the smell of muffins in
the morning!*

The BUM takes one of the muffins out of the box and takes a giant bite scattering crumbs all over the PRIEST'S black jacket.

BUM

Smells like victory...

The BUM reaches into his dirty overcoat with his free hand while he takes a final huge bite of muffin. He pulls out a bottle of cheap wine, unscrews the cap and takes a long swig.

He wipes his mouth with the sleeve of his filthy coat.

BUM

BELCH!

He looks back into the box eyeing the last lonely muffin. He picks it up and sticks it into one of the pockets of his filthy overcoat.

THE END

The credits start to roll.

TUCO

WHAT THE FUCK WAS THAT!

TERRY

What is this... a joke?

TUCO grabs JOEY by the collar and lifts him out of the expensive black leather theatre chair. He starts shaking and swinging JOEY around like a Pit Bull with his favorite sock puppet.

TERRY stands with her hands on her hips fuming at her ex husband's mean spirited scheme to trick her out of a fair divorce settlement.

TERRY

I'll kill the son-of-bitch!

TUCO bangs JOEY into the wall a few times causing a number of large framed BOBBY RICHARD'S movie posters to go off kilter.

TUCO

Get in line lady. I'm going to kill the little prick first.

TERRY

Not that prick you idiot, my husband... He's the one that set this whole fucking scam in motion.

TUCO

Your husband... BOBBY RICHARDS?

TERRY

My ex husband...

TUCO has JOEY a foot off the ground pinned up against a wall with one hand while holding off the hysterical JEANIE PHILLIPS with the other.

TERRY

Will you let go of him for Christ sake, before you break something!

TUCO releases his grip on JOEY. JOEY drops to the floor in a heap. JEANIE kneels down beside him making sure he's all right.

TUCO

Your husband set this whole thing up just to screw you out of a divorce settlement?

TERRY

That's exactly what's he's done.

TUCO

Jesus, lady, I thought I got
screwed.

TUCO turns to JOEY and JEANIE who are both still on the
floor.

TUCO

Don't think this let's you off
the hook you little prick. You
still owe me the money.

JEANIE looks up at TUCO from the floor beside JOEY.

JEANIE

We'll get you your money, but we
want our interest in the movie
back.

TUCO laughs.

TUCO

You want it back? It's yours,
for all it's worth. I wouldn't
wipe my ass with this piece of
shit. You just get me my money.

TUCO storms out of the house.

JEANIE looks at TERRY.

TERRY

You got an idea?

JEANIE nods.

TERRY

How about a drink?

FADE OUT

Just Desserts

EXT. THE MARTINI SHOT EATERY - NIGHT

Paparazzi crowd the busy sidewalk in front of The Martini Shot Eatery, Hollywood's latest hotspot. It's a place where deals are done and reputations are made. Exotic automobiles, more expensive than most people's homes, stop in front of the restaurant.

Tuxedoed valets and car jockeys rush to open doors to what seems like a never-ending procession of Gucci, Fendi, and Versace.

Each new arrival is greeted with an explosion of electronic flashes and screaming fans. The beautiful people dash to The Martini's welcoming entrance flashing their dazzling white capped ivories, while the ladies show enough hot flesh to melt the lens on a photographer's Hasselblad.

As each guest enters the ornate carved double wooden doors designed to keep the riffraff at bay, they are handed the restaurant's signature concoction, the Lychee Martini: a vodka lychee juice, and vermouth mixture designed to settle the nerves, wet the appetite, and loosen the tongue.

INT. THE MARTINI SHOT EATERY - NIGHT

JEANIE, JOEY, BELINSKY, KASHA, and TERRY RICHARDS sit at a dark maroon suede banquette that surrounds a centre stage table reserved for the most favoured guests of the evening.

The table is littered with great reviews of *The Dead Eye Dick*, and predictions for the upcoming award season. The champagne is flowing freely. Studio heads, a-list actors, and directors stop by in an endless stream of congratulatory sycophancy.

With JEANIE'S assistance and the potent power of JAKE BELINSKY'S mind expanding treats and snortable party favours, TERRY RICHARDS was able to convince her movie insider friends to get *The Dead Eye Dick* played at a variety of prestigious film festivals. There hope was to get a distribution deal that would generate enough money for JOEY to payoff TUCO, and for TERRY to pay her divorce lawyers.

To everyone's surprise the critics loved it.

One influential newspaper raved:

"The Dead Eye Dick is a brilliant merging of Altman's stream of conscious adlibbing and Fellini's baroque fantasy montages delivered by a fabulous cast of newcomers that rival Cheech Marin and Tommy Chong's laidback comic brilliance."

Another important Hollywood scribe wrote:

"JOEY WATKINS? JAKE BELINSKY? WTF! Who knew brilliance could be found at a hippie muffin shop."

In the end TERRY RICHARDS ended up with more money from the movie than she would ever have seen from a reasonable divorce settlement.

With his share of the profits, JOEY was able to payoff TUCO, and parlay *The Dead Eye Dick's* success into a three-picture deal with a major studio.

JAKE BELINSKY quit screenwriting to devote full time to expanding Kasha's Kitchen and Bikini Boutique into a nationwide muffin empire despite being under investigation by the FBI.

And finally JEANIE PHILLIP'S got what she wanted, a new last name, and JOEY'S community property.

THE END