

A COLUMBIA PICTURES, LAWRENCE GORDON PRODUCTION

HARD TIMES (C.2)

Produced By  
Lawrence Gordon

Directed By  
Walter Hill

This story is true in most details.  
The names have been changed.  
Not much else.  
It has no moral.

LOUISIANA

1936

PART ONE

After all, characters are best explained through their behavior.

Old Welsh saying

Talk's cheap.

Old American saying

HARD TIMES

1 TRAIN

DAY

passing slowly into a switching yard.

2 CHANEY

standing in an open boxcar.

3 GRAVEL ROAD

Old pickup truck stopped, waiting as the train slides by.

Two children in the rear of the truck.

One of them, a ten-year-old boy, stands and watches the train.

He sees Chaney.

Their eyes hold on one another.

4 CHANEY

as the boy and truck disappear from his eyeline.

Boxcars stand empty in the switchyard beyond.

5 TRAIN

Blast of steam.

Cars slam against their couplings as the engine continues to decelerate.

6 CHANEY

grasping a ladder on the boxcar siding.

The city of Baton Rouge sliding before him.

He jumps.

Lands standing in a gravel bed.

The train moves past.

7

## INDUSTRIAL SIDING

Smokestacks.

Old brick.

Chaney moving by stationary boxcars.

Chewing a matchstick.

Black duffel bag over one shoulder.

CUT.

8

## DINER

Chaney enters.

WAITRESS with a stained apron.

Chaney stands at the counter.

CUT.

9

## CHANNEY .

still at the counter, reading a paper.

Empty chili bowl.

A warehouse across the way.

A few cars drive up.

Men begin to file inside the building.

Chaney watches, looks to the Waitress, points at his empty coffee cup.

## WAITRESS

Third refill costs you a nickel.

Chaney gets up.

Puts a nickel on the counter.

Walks out.

CUT.

10 INSIDE THE WAREHOUSE

NIGHT

Dark. Shadow-crossed.

A group of men -- some seated, some standing, all of them expectant.

11 FOUR MEN

stand at the center.

Two of the men are opponents -- big physical types dressed in work clothes. They eye one another cautiously, paying little attention to whoever happens to be speaking.

12 SPEED

A man past the first flush but who still possesses great energy.

Speed moves toward the onlookers.

SPEED

Two fifty on the scratch. Now I need somebody to hold it. How about you, friend...

An OAF comes forward, takes the money.

SPEED

Okay. Don't run off with that now, friend. Just a little joke. I got another two-five-oh on the side. Anybody want some. Who's betting against my hitter.

VOICE

Fifty. You're in.

SPEED

Got it.

VOICE

Twenty-five.

SPEED

Okay, twenty-five. One-seven-five left.

Silence.

(CONTINUED)

12 CONTINUED:

SPEED

Nobody wants to bet against my  
hitter.

Silence.

SPEED

We gotta start selling tickets.

CAESARE moves near Speed.

Small and energetic, he drums up business on the other  
side.

CAESARE

Three on my side. I got three.

VOICE

Thirty.

CAESARE

Right.

VOICE

Ten. I got ten.

CAESARE

Biggies... Anybody...

A few more bets, then complete silence.

VOICE

I'll take fifteen.

CAESARE

Real spenders, real highrollers...  
we got here... You had your chance.

Speed walks over to his man.

Speed turns.

SPEED

Okay. We're ready over here.

CAESARE

Just remember, anything but hitting  
when the man is down. I don't  
want your boy claiming he don't  
know the rules... Let him go.

(CONTINUED)

12 CONTINUED: (2)

Speed leans over his hitter's shoulder.

SPEED

All right now -- you want it --  
you gotta want it... All right,  
go get it.

13 THE TWO FIGHTERS

approach each other.

Both open and raise their palms.

Hold for a moment.

No weapons or rings.

They drop their arms.

Fighting positions.

One gets off an overhand right.

14 CHANEY

in the shadows.

watching.

15 THE FIGHTERS

Speed's man tries a kick.

Gets knocked backward for his trouble.

Grapple.

Hair pull.

Powerful men but without grace.

Brawlers.

Punch.

Kick.

Punch.

(CONTINUED)



15 CONTINUED:

Chancery.

Gouge.

Speed's man takes several shots.

Goes down on his back.

It's not going to be his night.

16 CHANEY

watching.

CUT.

17 OYSTER BAR

NIGHT

Midnight crowd.

Speed, alone, finishing a dozen on the half-shell.

Reading the Police Gazette.

Speed rises, sets aside his tabloid, moves to the help-yourself-and-eat-all-you-want-for-thirty-cents counter.

SPEED

Hey, buddy -- I think I can use  
about six more of those... and  
another lemon.

18 SPEED

gets his tray filled, turns back, sees:

19 CHANEY

sitting at his table.

20 AT THE TABLE

Speed takes his seat, again picks up his paper.

After a moment.

(CONTINUED)

20 CONTINUED:

SPEED

You can start anytime, pal.

CHANEY

Chaney.

SPEED

So what.

CHANEY

We can make some money.

SPEED

Right. I'm all ears, friend.

He continues to eat.

CHANEY

That piece of business tonight.  
You set it up.

SPEED

Happens all the time.

Chaney takes an oyster.

SPEED

Help yourself.

CHANEY

Thanks.

SPEED

I suppose you been down the long  
hard road.

CHANEY

Who hasn't.

SPEED

Jail?

CHANEY

What're you -- a policeman?

SPEED

I just like knowing where a man  
comes from.

Wait.

(CONTINUED)

20 CONTINUED: (2)

Chaney looking directly at Speed.

SPEED

Well, you look a little past it, friend. Besides, I already got a hitter.

CHANEY

I saw him.

SPEED

Son of a bitch quit on me tonight. Look, friend... Every town's got a bar and every bar's got somebody in it that thinks he's as tough as a nickel steak. But they always look to Speed for the old dough-re-mi. If he's a bum -- I lose.

Chaney takes out some money.

CHANEY

I don't want your dough... I got six bucks and nothing else. You bet it.

CUT.

21 WAREHOUSE

FOLLOWING NIGHT

Speed and Caesare standing at the center.

Chaney and Caesare's hitter eye one another.

CAESARE

Well... well... well, my old friend Speed's back with another potential winner. Any of you want to bet my man?

VOICE

Not after last night.

CAESARE

... anybody... Somebody... Looks pretty good to me... I'll give two to one... Three to one...

(CONTINUED)

21 CONTINUED:

Silence.

CAESARE

Come on, those kind of odds don't  
come around every day...

Silence.

CAESARE

Guess you boys aren't as dumb  
as he is.

Speed moves up.

SPEED

One-five-oh in the pot. Here,  
hold this again. I got the same  
for anybody that expects a repeat.

VOICE

Fifty.

VOICE

Twenty.

VOICE

Forty.

SPEED

I'll take it. All of it.

VOICE

You're crazy, man.

SPEED

You betting. I got fifteen left.

VOICE

I'll do it.

SPEED

Amazing courage. You're on.

Speed reaches into his pocket.

He looks over at Chaney.

SPEED

I got another six bucks. It's  
all I got. Who wants it.

(CONTINUED)

21 CONTINUED: (2)

VOICE

I'll fade it.

SPEED

Big time gambling man there.

The oaf again holds the money. All buck teeth.

Speed moves next to Chaney.

SPEED

I did my part, pal. He's all yours.

Crowd yelling derision at Chaney.

CAESARE'S FIGHTER

Hey, pops, ain't you a little old for this.

Chaney drops his coat.

Silence.

The two hitters move out.

Palms up.

Caesare's man comes forward.

Chaney feints, hits him once.

Once is enough.

Out like a match.

22 SPEED

He's just seen the answer to a gambling man's prayers.

CUT.

23 PULLMAN CAR

NIGHT

Passengers reading, sleeping.

SOUND of WHEELS OVER TRACK.

24 CHANEY

sits quietly at the rear of the car.

Relaxed, watching.

His black leather duffel bag on the seat opposite.

Speed is next to him counting out the winnings.

SPEED

Just like anything else in this world, got to have money to make money. Here's your twelve and ten to have a little fun on... We got lots of time to work out our official deal. We're going to get plenty more where this came from, don't worry about that... New Orleans... Speed's coming home.

Big smile.

Speed takes a pull from a flask he has removed from his coat pocket.

Offers a shot to Chaney.

Declined.

Speed maintains his grin.

A real flash of the ivories.

SPEED

Here we come. High, wide and handsome.

25 THE CONDUCTOR

passes, makes his way to the front of the car, disappears beyond.

26 CHANEY

pulls his cap down.

Closes his eyes.

The train rumbles through the night.

CUT.

27 TRAIN STATION - NEW ORLEANS MORNING

The overnight limited pulls into the depot, glides to a halt.

WHISTLE BLAST and a lurch.

28 CHANEY

carries his bag, moves down the gangway with a few scattered passengers and onto the main concourse.

Speed at his side.

SPEED

I'll give you a ride -- I've got a big Packard, lots of room... I like a big car.

29 TRACKSIDE

Chaney and Speed are approached by an attractive young WOMAN.

SPEED

Hello, Sugarplum.

A light kiss to Speed's cheek.

One eye on Chaney.

WOMAN

How'd it go, Speedy.

SPEED

Rough start but a fast finish.

WOMAN

How much.

SPEED

Even.

She's got a talent for sarcasm.

WOMAN

Wonderful.

(CONTINUED)

29 CONTINUED:

SPEED

Always be pleasant around strangers,  
Gayleen... This is Mr. Chaney.  
Chaney, Gayleen Schoonover, my  
permanent fiance.

GAYLEEN

I'm pleased to meet you, Mr.  
Chaney.

Chaney nods to her.

They walk.

CHANEY

I'll just say goodbye here.

SPEED

Wait a minute. We got plans to  
make...

CHANEY

I just want to feel my way around  
the city.

SPEED

What about our partnership.

CHANEY

I don't like to rush things.

SPEED

Don't like to rush things. Look,  
we got a deal. Jesus Christ.  
What are you talking about.

GAYLEEN

Always be pleasant around strangers,  
Speed.

Wait.

GAYLEEN

Are we going to see you again,  
Mr. Chaney.

CHANEY

I might turn up.

Chaney walks away.

(CONTINUED)



29 CONTINUED: (2)

SPEED

Son of a bitch.

Shouts after him.

SPEED

Hey, Royal Street. Number 17.  
Look me up, ya hear.

Chaney keeps walking.

GAYLEEN

Who was that guy.

SPEED

I'll tell you who he is. Money  
on the hoof.

CUT.

30 A DOOR

DAY

being opened by an elderly MAN; looking back over his  
shoulder, he can see Chaney, holding his black valise,  
standing at the top of a staircase.

Chaney walks past the Man and into the room.

31 THE ROOM

Gray walls.

Bare wood floors.

Small bed.

Night table.

Two hardwood chairs and a small table at the center.

Nothing else.

Nothing.

Chaney looks the place over as the Old Man starts his  
sales pitch.

(CONTINUED)

31 CONTINUED:

OLD MAN

It looks a little rougher than it is. But you get a lot of sun through the window... Fix the place up, it could be real nice.

Chaney tosses his duffel bag on the bed.

OLD MAN

I got some furniture down in the storage room you could use.

CHANEY

I like it the way it is.

Chaney crosses to the window, looks down to the street below.

A Skiffle band playing across the street.

Harmonica, trombone, tambourine and a dancer.

OLD MAN

Buck and a half a week... in advance.

Chaney digs into his pocket and gives the Man some cash.

The Old Man looks at the money, pockets it with a gesture; places a key on the center table and walks out of the room.

A blade fan overhead.

Chaney looks at it.

Flips the switch.

Doesn't work.

He walks to the middle of the room, reaches up, twirls the blade.

It begins to turn.

Chaney seats himself on the edge of the bed.

Somebody's playing a RADIO nearby.

CUT.

32 THE PEARL RESTAURANT

LATE NIGHT

Cafeteria style.

Few customers.

The COUNTERMAN idly smokes a cigarette; white t-shirt under his apron. He reads a paperback Western.

Chaney catches the Counterman's attention by rapping his knuckles sharply on the divider.

CHANNEY

Hey -- gimme a cup of coffee.  
Black.

MAN

That's all.

CHANNEY

That's it.

Chaney looks around the room.

At one of the back tables he sees:

33 LUCY SIMPSON

Eccentrically attractive but with querulous, doubting eyes.

A bit shopworn for her years.

Chaney suddenly looms over her.

CHANNEY

Mind if I sit down.

Chaney's eyes meet hers.

CHANNEY

Sorry.

He turns away.

LUCY

Hey, I'm just having a cup of  
coffee. I don't own the chair.

Chaney sits down. She avoids his look.

(CONTINUED)

33 CONTINUED:

CHANEY

You want to talk, or you just  
want to sit.

LUCY

Maybe I'm waiting for somebody.  
You think of that.

CHANEY

Maybe you are.

LUCY

I am.

CHANEY

What's your name.

LUCY

Lucy.

CHANEY

Who you waiting for.

LUCY

Waiting for someone to buy me  
another cup of coffee...

CHANEY

Here -- have mine...

He pushes his cup across to her.

CHANEY

You live around here.

LUCY

Didn't take you long to get  
around to that one.

CHANEY

I thought maybe I might walk  
you home.

LUCY

Not likely.

CUT.

## 34 CHANEY AND LUCY

Walking down a dark street bordered by rows of peeling Victorians -- now converted into rooming houses.

Some late-nighters are sitting out on the open porches.

LUCY

A girl had two choices in my home town, stay and be bored or move out and take your chances.

CHANEY

How's your luck been running.

LUCY

Why, how can you ask that. Look how good I'm living.

They stop in front of one of the Victorians.

CHANEY

I've seen worse.

LUCY

Depends on what you're looking for. What about you.

CHANEY

I don't look past the next bend in the road.

They move up on the porch.

Two doors on either side of the entrance.

CHANEY

You want me to come up.

LUCY

No, I don't.

CHANEY

You sure.

LUCY

Look, thanks for the walk but it's not that easy. I've got a husband in jail, no job, and no prospects. I think that's enough trouble in my life right now. And letting you into my place means trouble.

(CONTINUED)

34 CONTINUED:

CHANEY

I wasn't planning on bothering you.

LUCY

What was your plan.

Wait and a smile.

CHANEY

Maybe I'll see you around.

She smiles.

LUCY

Maybe.

Chaney turns away; she goes through the door.

CUT.

35 SPEED

seated on his apartment balcony.

Newly risen despite the midday hour, he has merely attired himself with a pair of trousers.

Speed's early morning activity: he makes crayon-pencil circles on potential winners in the Daily Racing Form.

36 GAYLEEN

sleeping in the apartment's Murphy bed.

37 SPEED

continues working his form chart.

DOORBELL.

Speed rises, stretches, moves to the balcony rail.

38 STREET BELOW

Chaney looking up at Speed.

39 SPEED

This isn't the worst thing that's ever happened to him.

SPEED  
Jesus H. Christ.

CUT.

40 APARTMENT DOOR

Speed lets Chaney into the flat.

SPEED  
Good to see you, pal. I'm mighty  
glad you found time to drop by...

Chaney looks the place over.

A real dump.

Speed's all smiles.

SPEED  
Come on out, we'll get things  
started right.

They walk past Gayleen, still sleeping in the bed.

SPEED  
Don't mind Sleeping Beauty; she's  
not one to rush into a day's work.

Shouts.

SPEED  
Are you, Goddamn it. We got an  
important quest. Now, how about  
some breakfast around here.

Gayleen raises her head.

GAYLEEN  
Mornin'...

Falls back into sleep.

41 BALCONY

Speed leads Chaney outside.

42 CHANEY

seated at the balcony table.

Speed is still mumbling about Gayleen.

SPEED

Christ on a crutch...

He turns to Chaney.

SPEED

I suppose you want to talk deal.  
We go fifty-fifty on scratch bets  
and expenses. Side bets I keep  
seventy-five percent. That's how  
it works.

Chaney stares at him.

Speed lights up a cigarette.

CHANEY

Sixty-forty in my favor on scratch.  
Side bets down the middle.

SPEED

I'm telling you the going rate.  
What's normal. Ask anybody.

CHANEY

We'll do things different.

SPEED

Why should we.

CHANEY

Right now you got a percentage  
of nothing.

Chaney stands up.

Starts to leave.

SPEED

That makes me even with you...  
I'm putting up all the money,  
taking all the risks.

Chaney turns.

Looks at Speed.

(CONTINUED)



42 CONTINUED:

SPEED

All right, pal. We'll do it  
your way.

Speed gives a shout into the next room.

SPEED

What does a man have to do to  
get some breakfast around here.

Continued silence from the woman of the house.

SPEED

You know, I got a great feeling  
about this -- we can make some  
real money. I'll try to get  
something set up for next week.  
But we'll go in slow... Five,  
six hundred...

CHANEY

There's something I want you to  
know. I just came here to make  
some money and fill in some in  
betweens...

SPEED

In between. Hell, that's no  
living.

CHANEY

It suits me. When I get enough  
change in my pocket, I'm gone.

CUT.

43 RIVER LANDING

DAY

Tugboat moored alongside a barge.

A tightly compressed crowd gathered around and above  
the flat-bed.

44 SPEED AND CHANEY

stand well back among the spectators.

Speed uses his confidential voice.

(CONTINUED)

44 CONTINUED:

SPEED

We'll put this down to research,  
part of your education.

45 CHICK GANDIL

A young man, mid-thirties, well dressed.  
He possesses a touch of the light about him.  
Seated on a high chair near the center.

46 THE TWO OPPONENTS

A swarthy man stands bare-chested; Gandil's hitter, a  
huge bald man, JIM HENRY, stands smiling across the way.  
Caesare is working the shill; he moves into his pitch.

CAESARE

Any more bets on Nick here... Last  
call. Bets.

GANDIL

I'm laying five to one.

CAESARE

He's giving five to one on Jim  
Henry. Let's hear it. Can't  
get any better than that.

A shout and a smile from Jim Henry.

JIM HENRY

I want to have a long talk with  
anybody betting against me.

47 SPEED AND CHANEY

settle into the crowd.

SPEED

I'm going to cast some bread  
upon the waters.

Shouts.

(CONTINUED)

47 CONTINUED:

SPEED

A hundred against Curly.

Gandil looks at Speed.

SPEED

On a marker.

CAESARE

No markers.

SPEED

Chick, boy...

Gandil continues to look at Speed, then back at his own man.

GANDIL

Take it.

CAESARE

Five hundred to a hundred on a marker. Who else? Anyone. Last call.

VOICE

Fifty.

ANOTHER VOICE

Start 'em.

CAESARE

Fifty. Last call. All right. Get down to it.

Palms up.

Jim Henry slams the swarthy man against the bulkhead, then pursues him with measured intent.

Knocks him down.

No contest.

Knocks him down again.

SPEED

That's why he's the best.

Crowd shouting.

(CONTINUED)

47 CONTINUED: (2)

SPEED

Nobody's beat him. Not many  
want to try.

CHANEY

Who's the sharpie over there...

SPEED

Chick Gandil. One of the biggest  
money-belts in town. Born alongside  
the old silver spoon. That son  
of a bitch has broke me out three  
times... And he's the one we're  
going to shake.

The SOUND of FISTS striking home.

CUT.

48 INSIDE BLACK PENTECOSTAL CHURCH

A small congregation.

All of them singing.

Choir at the front letting go on a spiritual.

49 SPEED

moves down the aisle, eyes searching...

He sees a man huddled up alone on one side of the pews.

Other than Speed, he is the only white man on the pre-  
mises.

Speed whistles at him.

No response.

SPEED

Poe, ssst.

50 POE

looks up.

(CONTINUED)

50 CONTINUED:

Small, loose-jointed, he has the appearance of a river-boat gambler whose luck has disappeared.

Assuming it was ever there.

Speed nods toward the rear door.

Poe rises.

51 GRAVEYARD CORRIDOR

Speed's car parked behind.

Some of the dear departed buried in the wall lining the corridor, others in raised graves beyond the path.

SPEED

What the hell you doing in there.

SOUNDS from the church continue.

POE

I've always been a student of comparative religion. The Pentecostals present a number of points of interest.

SPEED

How much doping you doin'...

POE

This month my financial condition has prevented certain journeys of the imagination.

SPEED

Good, because we're back in business. There's someone I want you to meet.

52 CHANEY

at one end of the corridor.

Poe and Speed move to him.

(CONTINUED)

52 CONTINUED:

SPEED

Chaney, this is Poe. Like I told you, he's good. Takes care of broken noses, cut eyes, all the hurts and pains...

POE

I've got two years of medical school to recommend me.

CHANEY

Two years doesn't make a doctor.

POE

While in the third year of my studies a small black cloud appeared on campus... I left under it.

SPEED

What he's saying is, he was a dyed in the wool hophead...

POE

I have a weakness for opium.

Chaney looks at Poe.

Smiles.

CHANEY

That's a habit that's hard to quit.

POE

A victim of circumstance. Some are born to fail, others have it thrust upon them... Could I see your hands.

Takes Chaney's hands.

POE

No protruding knuckles. No calcium deposits. Make a fist. More area to absorb the concussion of a blow without breaking. Simple matter of engineering stress.

(CONTINUED)

52 CONTINUED: (2)

SPEED

Oh yeah, good hands.

Poe looks at Chaney's face.

POE

Skin looks reasonably thick...  
I'd say there's a good chance  
that you're not what Speed, with  
an unfortunate turn of phrase,  
refers to as a 'bleeder.'

SPEED

Like I told you, he's good. He  
knows his stuff.

CHANNEY

How much.

SPEED

Ten percent of what we win,  
plus expenses. It's the standard.

Chaney decides.

Poe and Chaney shake hands.

CUT.

53 STAIRCASE

NIGHT

Chaney moves up the stairwell.

A cat under one arm, grocery bag under the other.

54 ON THE LANDING

He puts the cat into the top of the grocery bag and with  
his free hand unlocks the door to his room.

55 INSIDE THE ROOM

Chaney stands in the bleak kitchen area.

Sink, icebox, hotplate.

(CONTINUED)

55 CONTINUED:

Chaney empties the grocery sack onto the shelves.

Canned soup, lunch meat, loaf of bread, milk.

Chaney puts some milk into a bowl and places the bowl on the floor.

CUT.

56 THE CAT

finishes eating, preens.

57 CHANEY

watches the cat a moment...

Then moves over to the bed.

Takes fifty-six dollars out of his wallet.

Counts the money.

CUT.



## PART TWO

they speak whatever's on their mind  
they do whatever's in their pants  
the boys i mean are not refined  
they shake the mountains when they dance

e.e. cummings

## 58      FACTORY AREA

Chaney, Speed and Poe walk through a pipe and tank yard.

POE

Well, Speed, I see you have secured employment for us in another romantic part of town.

Speed looks at Chaney.

SPEED

Sorry about that but opponents are harder and harder to come by... You don't mind fighting Black do you.

CHANEY

Just so long as the money's green.

SPEED

That's exactly the way I look at it.

CUT.

## 59      FIGHT AREA

DAY

Chaney and Poe stand watching.

Crowd behind and around them.

Speed at the center.

He looks over at the opponent and his HANDLER.

HANDLER

Any takers... any takers...

VOICE

Fifteen. Fifteen.

HANDLER

Covered.

Speed hands the pot-bet to a bystander.

SPEED

Listen, I got a few bucks here for anybody that wants to bet against my man Chaney... Two to one.

(CONTINUED)

59 CONTINUED:

No takers.

SPEED

Come on, Christ's sake. Two to one.

Silence.

SPEED

Jesus, you folks are rough on somebody trying to make a buck. Okay, three to one. Three to one. Come on up and get it.

Still no takers.

SPEED

Four to one.

More silence.

HANDLER

Looks like they ain't biting, Speed. I got all mine laid out. You folks about ready?

Speed shrugs, walks back to Chaney and Poe.

Speed looks at Chaney.

Chaney begins to take off his coat, shirt and cap.

SPEED

Well, we're only in for the pot-bet.

POE

The price of success.

SPEED

Look, you know you could carry this smoke for a while. Take a few here and there... put on a real good show. Might get us some takers next time.

Chaney looks very hard at Speed.

CHANNEY

Don't ever ask me that.

(CONTINUED)

59 CONTINUED: (2)

Chaney goes out.

POE

What a dismal idea. Especially  
when one's own face isn't involved.

Speed shoves Chaney's cap into Poe's arms.

SPEED

What's the matter with you.

The opponent moves up to meet Chaney.

Palms up.

60 FIGHT

After a spirited struggle, Chaney batters the bigger man  
into submission.

He returns and begins to put on his shirt and coat.

Speed and he exchange looks.

Speed's features are downcast.

The pot-bet man walks over to Speed.

Hands him the money.

HANDLER

That's a lot of money for a  
couple of minutes' work.

SPEED

Not nearly enough.

CUT.

61 BAR

Speed comes in the front door, looks around.

A large man steps in front of him.

SPEED

LeBeau here...

(CONTINUED)

61 CONTINUED:

Two men are seated at the rear: LeBEAU and DOTY.  
LeBeau is not the kind of guy you fool with.  
Someone once said you could strike a match on him.  
Doty is his flunky.  
Does the talking but doesn't make the decisions.  
Speed's eyes on LeBeau.  
The man takes Speed to LeBeau's table.

SPEED

I need a short-termer, a thousand.

DOTY

That's a heavy taste. How short.

SPEED

Day. Maybe two.

Doty looks at LeBeau.

Wait.

LeBEAU

I've done business with you before.

SPEED

About a year ago.

Wait.

SPEED

You got your money back.

LeBEAU

Yeah. You paid my three hundred back but you had to borrow from Hebert to do it. That one you didn't cover so well.

SPEED

So, three weeks over. Big deal.

LeBEAU

Closer to three months.

(CONTINUED)

63 CONTINUED:

Gayleen shouts at him through the window.

GAYLEEN

How long you going to be. I  
don't feel like sitting out here  
all day.

SPEED

Don't start complaining.

GAYLEEN

I just don't want you getting  
caught up in any game in there.

SPEED

It's business.

CUT.

64 CORRIDOR

Speed approaches a large door.

65 ATHLETIC CLUB - POOLSIDE

DAY

Five towel-draped men playing draw poker.

One of them Chick Gandil.

A lot of money on the table.

Jim Henry, fully dressed, is seated at the back of the  
room. Gandil looks up at Speed, then bumps for three  
cards.

SPEED

Hello, Chickie.

GANDIL

How's my personal pigeon.

SPEED

Just stopped by to pay off my  
marker.

Throws some money on the table.

(CONTINUED)

65 CONTINUED:

GANDIL

That's all right. We all make mistakes. I'd ask you to sit in but it's a big game.

SPEED

I'm keeping a lady waiting out there anyway.

MAN

Raise a hundred.

SPEED

Guess you heard I got a new hitter.

SECOND MAN

I'll see it.

GANDIL

Yeah, word gets around.

SPEED

I might even work him up to ape man.

Jim Henry looks up.

GANDIL

There's no mystery about that. My standard deal, just takes a thousand dollars up front.

THIRD MAN

I call.

GANDIL

Nice pot... You making an offer.

SPEED

Well, my man's just starting. A person would have to get real long odds to mix with skinhead over there.

Jim Henry's getting tired of the abuse.

His eyes flash at Speed.

GANDIL

Assuming you had the money, what kind of odds are you talking about.

(CONTINUED)

65 CONTINUED: (2)

SPEED

Five to one.

GANDIL

Three to one.

SPEED

Deal.

Speed throws the big roll of cash on the table.

Gandil looks at the greenbacks.

GANDIL

Somebody die and leave it to you.

SPEED

Three to one, Chickie. Money's on the table.

GANDIL

I don't like being hustled by a hope and prayer artist... You're not going to get in that cheap... The pot bet goes up to three thousand. Come back when you get that rich.

SPEED

You telling me we don't have a deal.

GANDIL

Not for a thousand.

Speed picks up his money.

SPEED

Nice meeting you, gentlemen.

Nods to Jim Henry.

SPEED

See you soon, Dempsey.

Heads for the door.

66 CORRIDOR

Speed shuts the door of the pool entrance and heads for the street.

(CONTINUED)



66 CONTINUED:

Big smile.

CUT.

67 BARBER SHOP

DAY

Speed has a bottle of beer in one hand, receiver in the other.

SPEED

... I'm feeling quite fine, Mr. Pettibon, quite fine... Uh, huh. Where'd you find this gorilla. Shook a few trees, I see... Well, we got a new boy here, I think could make you an interesting contest... That's a lot of money, Mr. Pettibon. I'm not sure my hitter's up to all that... He's just starting out, awful green but real game...

Poe, getting a shave on a nearby barber chair, smiles at Speed.

SPEED

Now, Mr. Pettibon, nobody can take advantage of you Bayou people, you know that. Just name the time and place, we'll be there... Okay, good talking to you.

68 AT THE CHAIR

SPEED

I told you it would be a fat one.

POE

How high.

SPEED

Two thousand George Washingtons, that high enough for you. Going to pay some bills.

(CONTINUED)

68 CONTINUED:

POE

The dun at the door and the wolf  
at the gate shall be held in  
abeyance... You're all that sure  
about Mr. Chaney?

SPEED

Does a goose go barefoot?... I'm  
going to go get a cigar.

CUT.

69 A DIRT ROAD

As Speed's Packard blazes along the sunny countryside.

70 A BAYOU TOWN

DAY

Speed's Packard prowls up the main drag, turns...  
The sidewalk and street are nearly vacant.

71 OPEN FIELD - CAJUN COUNTRY

Farm nearby.

A large barn on one side of the field.

Band playing.

Fish fry in progress.

Mules being auctioned.

A number of locals in attendance.

Speed drives up, winds his way through the citizens.

72 UNDER A HUGE SHADE TREE

The Packard comes to a halt.

Speed pushes the door open, gets out along with Poe and  
Gayleen.

(CONTINUED)

72 CONTINUED:

A large man approaches.

SPEED

Good to see you, Mr. Pettibon.

PETTIBON

Good to see you, Mr. Weed. Look what we done for your visit here.

SPEED

Mighty fine. This is my fiancée, Gayleen Schoonover and you know Mr. Poe.

PETTIBON

Sure I remember... Nice to see you again, sir.

Pettibon takes a hard look at Chaney.

POE

That's Chaney. He don't say much.

PETTIBON

Things go to plan, he won't be saying nothing later.

SPEED

That's your plan, not ours.

PETTIBON

You said he was green.

SPEED

Third time out.

PETTIBON

Well, he don't look on the unpicked side to me, but guess I'll let my man be the judge of that... That's him right over there.

73 CAJUN MAN

seated off by himself.

Calm repose.

## 74 AT THE PACKARD

Speed gives the opponent a professional once-over.  
By the look, he's a big, raw-boned country boy.

POE

He looks up to the mark.

PETTIBON

He'd better be. 'Course I could  
go another direction, let you  
folks take on a real test.

He gestures toward a cage.

SPEED

What'd you have in mind...

## 75 THE CAGE

Within it a large bear.

## 76 CHANEY

Chaney walks over to the bear.

The bear hurls himself against the bars.

Chaney watches every movement.

## 77 THE BEAR

Trying to get free.

## 78 AT THE PACKARD

Speed looking over at Chaney and the bear.

SPEED

That's an interesting idea you  
got there, Pettibon.

PETTIBON

I thought it might catch your  
fancy.

(CONTINUED)

78 CONTINUED:

POE

All things considered, we better  
stick to the two-legged one.  
When do you figure on getting  
started.

PETTIBON

How about right now, Mr. Poe.

Wait.

Speed still watching Chaney and the bear.

SPEED

Let's do it.

CUT.

79 A CLEARING

Chaney and his entourage are faced with a cluster of men.

80 AMONG THE CAJUNS

Chaney's opponent.

81 SPEED, CHANEY AND POE

Chaney drops his coat.

Moves forward.

CUT.

82 SPEED

standing beside Poe, shouting at the top of his voice...

SPEED

Jesus, Jesus... Chaney, get him.

A big dog barks loudly near Speed.

83 CHANEY

working the Cajun, measuring, landing; each careful blow  
going home.

84 THE CAJUN

now falling backward, landing against several cotton bales; a finished hitter.

85 CHANEY

turns away from the fallen man -- his job completed.

86 THE CROWD

Not pleased with the result.

87 SPEED

tosses Chaney his cap and coat.

POE

Very pretty. Very nice.

Chaney smiles.

CHANEY

Better get the money.

SPEED

Nobody ever has to tell me about that.

Speed goes out into the center, now the cock-of-the-walk.

Pettibon's got a long face.

SPEED

Well that's how it's done, Pettibon. I guess this just wasn't your day.

PETTIBON

Damn small question about that.

Speed reaches for the money being held in Pettibon's hand.

But Pettibon doesn't let go.

SPEED

What the hell you doing.

(CONTINUED)

87 CONTINUED:

PETTIBON

This has been a big setback for us... real big. I didn't think anybody could go through my man that way...

SPEED

Obviously an error in judgement on your part.

PETTIBON

It was too damned easy... like shooting birds off a telephone wire... Now Mr. Weed you said your man was just startin' out...

SPEED

There isn't any rules about anything except who wins. That money's ours.

Chaney moves up.

CHANEY

Something wrong.

PETTIBON

We got a problem. You're a ringer, Mister Chaney.

Speed is now very close to Pettibon.

SPEED

You give us our goddamn money.

PETTIBON

You want the money, take it.

A man in the crowd behind Pettibon steps forward.

He has a revolver in his waistband.

Chaney smiles.

POE

Somebody always shows up with a gun.

SPEED

You goddamn sack of country shit.

(CONTINUED)

87 CONTINUED: (2)

POE

Steady on, Speed, these boys are not refined.

PETTIBON

I think you folks ought to get in your car and drive on back home.

CHANEY

I think that's good advice.

Big smile from Pettibon.

PETTIBON

There's a man that's got some sense.

Speed looks at Chaney.

CHANEY

He doesn't want to pay.

SPEED

Just okay, never mind, huh. That's what we're going to do. Nothing.

Speed turns back to Pettibon.

SPEED

Listen, next time I come to this coon ass parish I'll bring the goddamn gun.

PETTIBON

Well, you do that -- Better make it a great big one. Now get on out.

Pettibon smiles.

CUT.

88 THE PACKARD

Speed kicks the engine over, socks the car into gear.

(CONTINUED)



88 CONTINUED:

POE

A sorry spectacle. A very poor example of Southern sportsmanship.

GAYLEEN

All this driving for nothing. My God, breaks your heart.

SPEED

Breaks my butt, is what it breaks.

CHANEY

Let's take things easy, drive around the back roads. See the sights.

SPEED

What the hell are you talking about.

CHANEY

Business.

CUT.

89 ROADHOUSE

NIGHT

A pool game in progress.

JUKEBOX PLAYING.

Pettibon watches the game while talking to a blonde woman.

The Man with the revolver is belly up to the bar.

With startling impact a spanner wrench comes TEARING through the front plate glass window.

All voices stop, all eyes to the front of the bar.

Chaney comes through the back door.

He hits the Man with the pistol in the kidney -- flattens him with the punch.

Chaney rolls him over, pulls out the revolver.

He walks toward Pettibon carrying the pistol loosely at his side.

(CONTINUED)

89 CONTINUED:

One of the pool players swings at Chaney with his cue; Chaney twists out of the way as the cue shatters across the pool table.

He puts the pistol in his pocket, then hammers the pool player with three punches, dropping him like a lead weight.

CHANNEY

Anybody else.

No takers.

Chaney faces the Cajun fighter, takes the pistol out again.

CHANNEY

What about you.

The Cajun fighter shakes his head.

Chaney has moved near Pettibon.

Speed and Poe have opened the front door of the bar, they stand blocking the entrance.

CHANNEY

I got the gun this time.

PETTIBON

Guess you do. But I'm not sure you want to use it.

Chaney swings the pistol in a tight circle, popping him on the side of the neck, sending Pettibon to the floor.

CHANNEY

That's one way. Want to see another.

Pettibon hesitates, then throws his wallet to Chaney.

Chaney removes the money, puts it in his pocket, tosses the wallet aside.

Chaney looks at the pistol in his hand.

He walks slowly over near the entrance. Poe and Speed have moved back outside.

CHANNEY

This your place, Pettibon...

(CONTINUED)

89 CONTINUED: (2)

Chaney turns back to the room.

He again looks at the gun, then to Pettibon.

Chaney suddenly BLASTS out the glasses over the mantle. Everyone in the roadhouse hits the floor.

Chaney looks at Pettibon.

Chaney BLASTS out the bar mirror.

Chaney BLASTS an overhead light.

Chaney BLASTS the jukebox.

Chaney BLASTS the wall phone.

Sudden silence.

Chaney sees himself in a portion of the shattered bar mirror.

Chaney BLASTS his own image. Then looks at Speed and Poe outside.

Chaney tosses the gun into the middle of the floor, starts for the exit.

90 OUTSIDE THE ROADHOUSE

Chaney, Poe and Speed, walking as the Packard comes tearing up to them.

The car arrives.

They hop in.

91 WITHIN THE PACKARD

Gayleen accelerates away.

GAYLEEN

What the hell was all that shooting.

Chaney settles into the back seat, pulls his cap down, preparing for sleep.

(CONTINUED)

91 CONTINUED:

Speed holds the huge ball of money in front of her face.

SPEED

Jesus Christ.

GAYLEEN

A-men.

Poe begins to sing.

POE

As I walk along the Bois Boolong  
with an independent air  
You can hear the girls declare  
'He must be a Millionaire.'

92 THE PACKARD

driving through the night.

POE

You can hear them sigh,  
And wish to die,  
You can see them wink the other eye  
At the man that broke the Bank at  
Monte Carlo.

CUT.

93 THE RIVER

as dawn breaks.

Boats on the water.

Skyline of New Orleans beyond.

CUT.

94 SPEED'S PACKARD

driving within the city.

Gayleen and Poe are sleeping.

CHANEY

Over there.

## 95 LUCY'S STREET

Trash collectors going about their tasks.

The Packard rubbers to a halt. Chaney gets out.

Gayleen awakens.

Speed looks at Chaney through the car window.

GAYLEEN

That where you live?

Chaney gives her a glance, turns to Speed.

CHANEY

See you in a few days.

SPEED

You know who's next.

GAYLEEN

My, my. If this isn't your place  
then who's the lucky lady?

Chaney continues to ignore her. He starts for Lucy's porch.

GAYLEEN

You have a real big time now.

Chaney does not look back.

Speed sticks his thumb into the air.

The Packard rumbles away.

## 96 ON THE PORCH

Chaney rings the bell. Waits.

Rings again.

The door opens a crack, night chain holding it in place.

LUCY

Who is it.

CHANEY

Chaney.

(CONTINUED)

96 CONTINUED:

She opens the door.

LUCY

What do you want.

CHANEY

Thought maybe you'd like to come out.

LUCY

You treating me to a champagne breakfast, or something.

CHANEY

Whatever you feel like.

LUCY

You know it's five a.m.

Wait.

LUCY

Christ, I barely know you.

CHANEY

Yeah, but would you like to.

They stand looking at each other.

LUCY

Why me.

CHANEY

Because we're the same. You don't want any trouble.

LUCY

I guess I can make some coffee.

He enters.

Door closes.

CUT.

97 CITY STREET

Shoeshine chair.

(CONTINUED)

97 CONTINUED:

Speed reading a paper while his shoes are being polished.

Rag popping.

Doty comes down the street and collects some money from the shoeshine boy.

SPEED

Hello, Doty.

DOTY

Speed...

Doty sits in the stand next to Speed.

DOTY

You know we haven't been seeing you around lately.

SPEED

You don't have anything going in the eighth, do you.

DOTY

A man that can afford a shoeshine sure ought to be able to pay his debts.

SPEED

I got to keep up appearances.

Wait.

DOTY

The way we figure it, you're overdue.

SPEED

For what... you pushing me. You're going to get your money.

DOTY

Sure we will.

SPEED

Look, I can give you two hundred right now.

He pulls out some bills.

(CONTINUED)

97 CONTINUED: (2)

Doty grabs Speed's hand...

DOTY

Keep it. He wants it all. Steal it, sell your sister, borrow it, but get it. LeBeau wants it all...

SPEED

Listen...

DOTY

Now.

SPEED

I need some time, pal. A couple of days... two days... I got something working. I can have it for you in two days.

DOTY

That better be a promise.

SPEED

You can bank on it.

CUT.

98 OUTDOOR RESTAURANT

DAY

Filled to capacity.

Animated chatting.

Chaney and Lucy at a table placed against a brick wall.

LUCY

You haven't gotten around to telling me what you do.

Chaney doesn't answer.

LUCY

It's something that people generally ask.

CHANNEY

Worried I can't pay the check.

(CONTINUED)



98 CONTINUED:

LUCY

No. I'm worried because you never answer any questions. Now tell me how you get money.

CHANEY

I knock people down.

Wait.

LUCY

You mean like a prize fighter.

CHANEY

Pick-up fights. Money's made on bets. It's just something I'm doing for a while.

LUCY

Funny way to make a living.

CHANEY

Beats changing tires at the bus station for two dollars a day.

LUCY

What's it feel like to knock somebody down.

CHANEY

Makes me feel a helluva lot better than it does him.

LUCY

That's a reason.

CHANEY

There's no reasons about it. Just money.

CUT.

99 PRIVATE DINING ROOM

NIGHT

Crowded.

Chick Gandil and friends, all impeccably dressed, enjoying champagne and conversation.

(CONTINUED)

99 CONTINUED:

Speed bursts into the room, Poe at his heels.

SPEED

Hello, Chick, good to see you.  
How's tricks.

Wait.

GANDIL

This is a private gathering. I  
don't believe you gentlemen were  
invited.

SPEED

You remember Poe here...

GANDIL

Mr. Poe...

SPEED

Only keep you a minute. Remember  
last time I saw you, you set a  
special number for that three to  
one. I'm going to take you up  
on that.

GANDIL

First you've got to have three  
thousand real, whole dollars,  
marker man. Otherwise, it's just  
an academic question.

Speed flashes a roll.

SPEED

You want to count it.

CUT.

100 CHANEY, SPEED AND POE

NIGHT

walk down a narrow, high corridor.

101 DOORWAY - POWERHOUSE

The trio emerges from the passageway, enter a maze of  
walkways bordered by overhead windows.

## 102 MAIN FLOOR - POWERHOUSE

They pass by huge generators.

## 103 TURBINE ROOM

A huge crowd fills the tiers around and above a wire mesh cage.

Shouting and betting becomes more intense as Chaney, Speed and Poe arrive.

## 104 CHANEY

Cap and coat still on, he enters the cage with his entourage.

He maintains a Samurai's silence.

## 105 SPEED

It's his big night.

For the occasion he's wearing a new suit; his fresh attire resembles that sported by men who sell toy boats on street corners.

Money in hand, he moves to the center.

## 106 GANDIL

Across the way with Jim Henry.

Big Jim rolls his shoulders.

Poe leans toward Chaney.

POE

Been a few unfortunate fighters  
busted their knuckles on that  
hard head of his...

Speed leans in.

Chaney stands, drops his coat and cap.

Speed turns toward the center.

(CONTINUED)

106 CONTINUED:

CAESARE

Bets in. Time. All bets in.

Jim Henry's eyes find Chaney.

He tries to stare him down.

JIM HENRY

Hey, old man, I'm going to end it for you.

SPEED

Just keep smiling, Jim. While you still got some lips.

JIM HENRY

When I get done with him I'm going to come after you, big shot.

SPEED

Only thing you'll be coming after is a doctor.

Speed now sotto voce to Chaney and Poe.

SPEED

Jesus... I just saw it. Nine thousand dollars in the man's hand. Takes your breath away.

Insult period completed, the crowd grows restive.

CAESARE

Let 'em work, start it. Get 'em going.

SPEED

We're ready over here.

Crowd yells.

Gandil is talking to Jim Henry.

Looks at Speed.

Gestures Jim Henry out.

Chaney takes two steps forward.

(CONTINUED)

106 CONTINUED: (2)

Palms up.

Jim Henry closes the ground. Lunges. Misses.

Chaney stops him with a right hand. A stinger.

Hits him in the liver.

Another stinger.

Knocks Jim Henry back against the wall of the cage.

Jim Henry rebounds off and comes back into it. Lands one, gets hit, lands another.

Misses a kick.

The crowd pushes around the cage, all of them shoving for a better view.

Jim Henry gets a rhythm going; left hand, right hand, kick.

Reaches for Chaney's hair.

Chaney responds. Slides to his left, crosses, back, overhand right. His best shot.

Jim Henry stopped mid-stride.

Chaney hits him again.

Again.

Again.

Now fighting like a machine.

Finishes him with a left hand feint and a crisp eight-inch right.

Jim Henry slams backward.

Goes flat on his back.

Rolls over on his stomach.

Doesn't roll any further.

(CONTINUED)

106 CONTINUED: (3)

Crowd very quiet.

SPEED

My, my, my, well, look at that...  
Lying there like a dead man...  
Hard to tell if we need an ambulance  
or a hearse. Second thought,  
somebody just go out and get a  
wheelbarrow for Mr. Gandil's  
hitter.

Gandil takes the pot-bet out of Caesare's hand then walks  
over to Speed.

He's taken defeat with seeming calm.

Hands Speed the pot-bet.

GANDIL

You've always had an unfortunate  
way of putting things.

Speed gives him his best smile.

SPEED

Nothing personal, Chick.

Crowd noise picks up again.

Poe throws Chaney's coat over his shoulders.

Gandil and Chaney catch each other's eye.

CUT.

107 THE KING COTTON CLUB

NIGHT

Five-piece band blazing away.

Twenty or thirty couples dance in the middle of the room.

IN A SPACIOUS BOOTH

Celebration after victory.

Chaney, Lucy, Speed and Gayleen are having a few pops;  
this point of the evening Speed is well oiled.

## 109 ON THE DANCE FLOOR

Poe has managed to come up with a date for the occasion.

She stands a head taller than the two-year medical student; together they dance with grace and vigor.

The number ends, Poe and his date head back to their table.

## 110 SPEED

leans in Chaney's direction.

SPEED

I got a message from Mr. Chick Gandil. He wants us to come up and have a little drink.

CHANEY

You handle it. I'm not interested.

SPEED

Come on, pal. He said us. Never hurt anything being polite.

## 111 DANCE FLOOR

as Poe and his date join the table crowd.

SPEED

Listen, Poe. We saw you out there. Smooth... real smooth.

POE

Thank you. Thank you. It's all in the partner you have.

SPEED

I'm going to make a toast. To the best man I know. To a mastermind. To the Napoleon of Southern sports. Me.

Drinks from his glass.

Looks at Gayleen.

SPEED

Come on Gayleen.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

111 CONTINUED:

SPEED (CONT'D)

Let's get with those galloping  
dominoes. We'll see you all  
later...

Speed and Gayleen grab their coats and leave.

112 POE AND HIS DATE

Heads close together.

POE

I assume you realize that the  
blood of the fabled Edgar Allen  
courses through my veins.

POE'S GIRL

No, but it sure sounds like I'm  
going to hear about it.

POE

I understand that you and noble  
literature are strangers. But  
on the occasion of this celebration  
I shall treat you to a burst of  
my ancestor's genius... Hear the  
sledges with the bells/Silver bells.  
What a world of merriment their  
melody foretells. How they tinkle,  
tinkle, tinkle -- In the icy air  
of night. While the stars, that  
oversprinkle -- All the heavens,  
seem to twinkle -- With a crystalline  
delight; Keeping time, time, time --  
In a sort of Runic rhyme, To the  
tintinnabulation that so musically  
wells -- From the bells, bells,  
bells, bells -- Bells, bells, bells...

The MUSIC grows louder.

CUT.

113 CRAP GAME

THAT NIGHT

Speed rolling.

(CONTINUED)



113 CONTINUED:

VOICES OVERLAPPING

Nine's point. Nine.

He craps out.

Speed can't believe it.

A hand takes an enormous pile of cash away from Speed.

Gayleen watching from across the crowded room.

SPEED

Son of a bitch.

VOICES

Put something up or pass the dice.

Wait.

SPEED

Son of a bitch.

VOICES

Push or shove.

He walks over to Gayleen.

Game continues behind him.

SPEED

Get your goddamn purse and coat.

GAYLEEN

You lost all of it.

SPEED

Shut up.

GAYLEEN

What. Sure, excuse me, Mr.  
High Roller. I should of known.  
Goddamn me for expecting anything  
else.

Speed just looks at her.

Not much a guy can say under these circumstances.

CUT.

## PART THREE

There is a code of honor among pickpockets and among whores. It is simply that the standards differ.

Ernest Hemingway

## 114 BACK OF A FERRY

The boat is churning across the river on the afternoon run.

Muddy water.

Chaney and Speed at the rail.

SPEED

I mean to tell you the chickens have come home to roost when we got Gandil begging for mercy. Every once in a while something happens in life that's just too good to be true.

CHANEY

How long an arm's he got.

SPEED

Gandil's a businessman. Always worried about his reputation. He's not going to try any muscle play.

Wait.

SPEED

But there's one thing we got to live with. Since you beat Jim Henry you're marked. From now on we'll have to give the odds. Fights are going to be hard to come by. Things are really going to get expensive. It's possible we could use Gandil.

CHANEY

No need worrying about it. We're getting toward the end of things.

SPEED

What the hell does that mean.

Chaney flips his matchstick into the water.

CUT.

## 115 LOADING DOCKS

DAY

Adjacent to the waterfront.

(CONTINUED)

115 CONTINUED:

Speed and Chaney walk past the raised concrete docks.  
Swampers about their work, unloading the fishing boats.

116 INSIDE THE WAREHOUSE

The two men move to the back of the large building and up the rear stairway toward the overhead office -- glass windows overlooking the rows of oyster shellers and fish-cleaning.

117 SPEED AND CHANEY

enter a small office.

Two SECRETARIES typing.

An accountant working his books.

SPEED

You can tell Gandil that Mr.  
Chaney and Mr. Weed are here to  
see him.

SECRETARY

He's expecting both of you. Just  
go right on in.

SPEED

Thank you, ma'am.

Jim Henry sits on a threadbare couch.

He looks at Chaney.

Still marked from the last time they met.

SPEED

How's your jaw, glass man.

Jim Henry ignores both of them as they move past.

118 INNER OFFICE

Spare, austere.

Gandil behind a desk.

(CONTINUED)

118 CONTINUED:

GANDIL

Glad you could drop by, Speed.

SPEED

Always a pleasure, Chick. You remember Chaney here.

They nod.

GANDIL

Sit down. Get comfortable.  
Have a drink.

SPEED

Thank you.

Speed has a seat. Chaney begins to prowl the room.

SPEED

No -- no. Little early for me.

GANDIL

All business.

SPEED

That's right, let's have it.

GANDIL

You've got a direct way of speaking.

A nervous moment.

SPEED

Don't let it upset you, Chick.

GANDIL

I like a man that's direct. Makes everything easy to understand. Like the old days. My father didn't win this business in a raffle, you know. He earned it.

SPEED

Chick -- we didn't come here for any history lesson. Let's get down to cases.

GANDIL

Maybe we should at that.

(CONTINUED)

118 CONTINUED: (2)

He produces an envelope, places it on the corner of his desk.

GANDIL

Five thousand dollars in this envelope. It's yours.

SPEED

I don't think I'm following the drift.

GANDIL

I'm buying half of Chaney. We'll do real well together.

SPEED

This comes a little bit quick.

GANDIL

Don't let it bother you. It's done. Pick up your money. We got a deal.

Chaney looks sharply at Gandil.

GANDIL

Just like buying a horse. We're partners. Fifty-fifty.

Chaney walks over.

CHANEY

Talk to me, not him.

A long moment.

GANDIL

I had the best streetfighter in this city. Now I don't. I don't like that at all.

CHANEY

We can get along without you.

GANDIL

Hooking up with me means more green for you. Bigger bets. Tell him, Speed.

(CONTINUED)

118 CONTINUED: (3)

SPEED

That part of it is true.

CHANEY

Like I said, we can get along  
without you.

Wait.

GANDIL

I'm sorry to hear that, Mr.  
Chaney. I like being associated  
with the best. I hope you'll  
come around to my way of thinking.

CUT.

119 OMITTED

120 WHOREHOUSE

NIGHT

Speed moves into the parlor, quickly looks the mer-  
chandise over.

It's not exactly a classy joint.

121 EIGHT DOXIES

smiling at Speed.

122 A MADAM

closes in on Mr. Weed.

Like her employees, she wears a professional smile.

MADAM

Well, well, look who's back --  
Ole Speed. You come to your  
Mama Lois to have a good time.

SPEED

I sure did.

(CONTINUED)

122 CONTINUED:

MADAM

I've got myself some lovely  
new girls.

She leads Speed into the parlor.

The girls all stand for approval.

MADAM

And Speed, each one's been  
especially trained to suit  
your fancy.

SPEED

Look, I don't need any sales  
pitch, Mama. I just came here  
to get my hat blocked.

MADAM

Take your pick.

CUT.

123 UPSTAIRS BEDROOM - WHOREHOUSE

NIGHT

Speed and a FLOOZY in the sack.

Having completed what they set out to do.

SPEED

What'd you say your name was.

FLOOZY

Carol.

SPEED

Carol, what'd you think of that.

CAROL

Hey, it was terrific. You were  
really great.

SPEED

You know something, that's exactly  
what I thought you would say.

CUT.



124 SPEED

NIGHT

wheeling his Packard up the street to his apartment.

125 STREET

Speed parks, shuts off the engine, gets out.

126 A BLACK

looking at Speed. He carries a sledgehammer. .

Doty stands nearby.

Wait.

The Black slowly walks by Speed.

The man slams the hammer across the Packard's fender.

SPEED

Hey -- what the hell...

Another hit.

SPEED

Hey, what's he doing, Doty.

Smash, smash, smash.

SPEED

No -- no... Oh, Jesus Christ.

Hey, come on. Don't do that.

The Black looks at Doty.

BLACK

Is that okay, Doty.

Doty smiles.

DOTY

Talk to him.

The big man turns to Speed.

BLACK

Mr. LeBeau, he says he's got some  
business with you.

(CONTINUED)

126 CONTINUED:

He puts the business end of the sledge on Speed's shoulder.

BLACK

He don't want no trouble. Just  
pay your debts. Okay, mister.

Hits the car again.

DOTY

You get the message.

The Black and Doty walk away.

Speed stands there.

CUT.

127 FERRY BOAT

DAY

Speed standing on deck.

He has a whiskey bottle in a brown paper bag.

Lifts it to his lips, drinks.

The ferry approaches the New Orleans side.

128 THE FERRY

being tied to the landing.

Speed walks off.

129 CHANEY AND POE

stand waiting as Speed approaches.

Cars roar off the ferry and up the ramp behind.

POE

Hello, Speed.

SPEED

Good to see my old friends...  
There's a few things that need  
discussing.

(CONTINUED)

129 CONTINUED:

They sit.

A long wait.

SPEED

I got to get something going  
in a hurry. Been thinking about  
that offer Gandil made us --  
We ought to reconsider.

CHANEY

Why the change of mind.

SPEED

I'm flat ass broke. I need some  
money fast.

CHANEY

I don't like Gandil.

SPEED

That's no reason.

CHANEY

It's reason enough for me.

SPEED

That's fine for you but it don't  
help my case a damn bit. If we  
don't go with Gandil, that means  
I got to borrow and my credit  
all over town is not too good.  
Can you loan me two thousand...  
That's what I need.

Wait.

Chaney gives him a long hard look.

CHANEY

You made the same as me, dollar  
for dollar.

SPEED

That's the way you look at it.

CHANEY

Yeah.

(CONTINUED)

129 CONTINUED: (2)

SPEED

Well, the way I look at it you owe me.

CHANEY

How the hell do you figure that.

SPEED

We used my money to begin with, right. My contacts... You were nothing when I met you and you'd be nothing without me.

Chaney gives him a longer look.

CHANEY

Dumb.

Chaney rises and starts away.

SPEED

You sayin' no to me...

Speed jumps up after him, grabbing the bottle of whiskey from Poe.

SPEED

Chaney.

130 CHANEY

turns back to look at Speed.

Speed holds the neck of the bottle in his hand.

Chaney looks at him.

Speed throws the bottle down.

Chaney looks at him another moment then walks away.

POE

Damn... Hell. Now we're both in it.

CUT.

131 TRAIN STATION NIGHT

Empty tracks.

132 RECEPTION PLATFORM

Gandil and Jim Henry stand waiting.

133 THE NIGHT SPECIAL

pulling into the station.

Steam blast.

Wheels lock.

134 PULLMAN CAR DOOR

A few passengers descend.

Among them a big man with the look of an athlete.

A very big man.

He carries a black leather duffle bag.

135 JIM HENRY

watches his successor.

136 GANDIL

Eyes like ice as STREET approaches.

GANDIL

Welcome to New Orleans, Street.

Street extends his duffle bag to Jim Henry.

JIM HENRY

I don't do that.

Street does not pull his arm away.

Jim Henry looks to Gandil.

(CONTINUED)

136 CONTINUED:

Gandil continues staring at Street.

Jim Henry takes the valise.

CUT.

137 LUCY'S APARTMENT - KITCHEN

NIGHT

Lucy cooking.

Chaney at the table.

Empty plate in front of him.

She looks at Chaney.

LUCY

You ever get scared when you do your work.

CHANEY

I never think about it.

LUCY

The only thing you care about is the money. Isn't that right. Just so the money's good... I'll tell you what I think. I think you like it, standing out there in the middle and everything coming down on you. I think you love it.

Wait.

LUCY

Don't you...

CHANEY

You got any more questions.

LUCY

Yeah. Try this one. You going to stay the night.

CHANEY

Not this time.

She grinds a pot across a burner.

(CONTINUED)

137 CONTINUED:

CHANEY

Get it out. What's bothering you.

LUCY

All right. Hell yes, something's wrong. A lot of things. The rent. Price of groceries. Clothes I can't buy. A few items like that.

CHANEY

How much do you want.

LUCY

I don't want your money. I want my money. And I don't want to wait on tables to get it.

CHANEY

You'll catch on somewhere.

LUCY

Do you ever read a newspaper. Things are tough... Besides, I want something with some life in it.

Chaney rises.

LUCY

The way things are now nothing connects. Like you. You don't connect to any other part of the way I live. Nothing does. Everything's in separate closets.

CHANEY

Things are better that way. Keeps them simple. Fewer edges showing.

LUCY

That's only good if you're on top of things. As soon as I get on the street with everybody else I get moved around. I don't like that.

Chaney removes some money from his wallet.

(CONTINUED)

137 CONTINUED: (2)

CHANNEY

Take some.

She shakes her head.

LUCY

I told you. I want my own. I don't want to depend on you. You're not reliable. You come when you want, go when you want and never mention what comes in the middle.

Chaney crumples the money in his hand.

CHANNEY

Suit yourself.

Puts on his cap and leaves.

CUT.

138 POOLROOM

Chaney drinking.

He watches two sleazos rack and shoot.

VOICE

I'll buy you one.

Gandil sits down. Jim Henry and Street stand a pace away.

GANDIL

How you been.

Wait.

GANDIL

You want to talk about the sporting life.

CHANNEY

I'm out of it.

GANDIL

That's too bad. Since I had to give up on you, I went out and bought another hitter. The best.

(CONTINUED)



138 CONTINUED:

CHANNEY

Must make you happy. Now you got  
what you want.

GANDIL

I'll tell you what I want...  
You must have saved quite a  
stash by now. How about five  
thousand. Him against you.

CHANNEY

I don't need any more money.

GANDIL

There's no point in avoiding  
this thing. It's going to happen.

STREET

He's right.

Chaney looks up at Street.

CHANNEY

You want it that much.

STREET

I'm getting paid.

Wait.

STREET

I can always reach over and start  
things right now.

CHANNEY

Yeah, but you won't.

Wait.

CHANNEY

You're not going to do it for  
free.

Chaney drinks up.

Leaves.

CUT.

139      OUTSIDE SPEED'S APARTMENT      NIGHT

A touring car is parked in the foreground.

Speed pulls his Packard into his usual parking space.

As he gets out of the car and starts for the house, two men grab him and force him across the street to the touring car.

He tries to resist.

SPEED

Hey, what the hell is this...  
Who the hell are you... Hey...

They push him into the back seat.

The car pulls off.

CUT.

140      BAR

After hours.

The four toughs bring in Speed.

LeBeau standing at the rail.

Looks at Speed.

Wait.

LeBEAU

This is your lucky night.

SPEED

That depends on how you look at it.

LeBEAU

I'll tell you how to look at it.  
Right about now I'd be deciding  
whether to break your back or  
your legs. But somebody paid the  
interest on your debt.

LeBeau looks over at a booth.

Gandil and Jim Henry are seated.

(CONTINUED)

140 CONTINUED:

Street is sitting beside them.

Gandil smiles at Speed.

GANDIL

Just for one week. Your man  
fights Mr. Street and I'll handle  
your whole mortgage.

SPEED

My man... Chick, he won't even  
speak to me.

GANDIL

Yeah, I know but we're going to  
put you on ice and maybe he'll  
speak to me.

CUT.

141 STEAMED MIRROR

A hand wipes a portion of the glass.

Chaney's face appears.

142 CHANEY'S ROOM

DAY

He has nearly finished shaving.

143 OPEN DOORWAY

Poe raps on the door, then enters the room.

Chaney looks at him.

Then turns back to the mirror.

POE

I don't want to interrupt anything.

Wait.

POE

Gandil came to see me. We've  
got a problem.

(CONTINUED)

143 CONTINUED:

CHANNEY

You and me don't have any trouble.

POE

I'm afraid we do. It's about our old friend Speed.

CHANNEY

He send you.

POE

Doesn't even know I'm here.

CHANNEY

Speed and I aren't related anymore.

Chaney finishes with the razor.

POE

Things don't work that easy. He's in a lot of trouble.

CHANNEY

Not interested.

Begins to wash up.

POE

Speed owes a ton to one of our local riffraff. They're putting the arm on him. Gandil's going to pay the loan off if you take on his man. No crowd. Just business.

CHANNEY

They want me to bet five thousand dollars... That's all the money I got.

Reaches for a towel.

CHANNEY

And I don't owe that Goddamn Speed nothing.

POE

That's not the point. It's real simple. He's in the ringer. You're the only one that can get him out.

(CONTINUED)

143 CONTINUED: (2)

Wait.

CHANEY

Money's hard to come by.

CUT.

144 HIGH WALLED ROOM

DAY

Sparsely furnished.

Speed, Jim Henry and two toughs playing draw poker.

SPEED

Has anybody got a cigarette.

TOUGH #2

I don't use 'em.

SPEED

I'd be happy to go down and get some.

TOUGH #1

You're not going anywhere.

JIM HENRY

Things don't work out tomorrow night, which one of you gets to do the job.

TOUGH #2

Both of us.

JIM HENRY

Uhh ah. I'll take him.

Speed is not threatened.

SPEED

Yeah, that's right. It's been a while since you won one... Chaney really cleaned your plow, didn't he.

Jim Henry looks at Speed.

SPEED

How'd it feel.

(CONTINUED)

144 CONTINUED:

JIM HENRY

Shut up and play cards.

Speed throws his cards in the air. They shower onto the floor.

Speed gets up from his chair, walks to the back of the room.

Looks out the window.

CUT.

145 LUCY

wearing a slip.

Walking through her place.

Opens the door.

Chaney.

LUCY

I've got a visitor.

CHANEY

Some other time.

Turns to go.

LUCY

No wait. I'll walk you down.

She grabs her coat off the hook, pulls it on, goes out the door.

146 ON THE STREET

Chaney and Lucy.

CHANEY

How you been.

LUCY

How do I look.

(CONTINUED)

146 CONTINUED:

CHANEY

No complaints.

Wait.

LUCY

There's something I want to tell you.

Wait.

LUCY

I don't think you should drop by anymore.

Wait.

LUCY

Things have changed.

Wait.

LUCY

I think I'm moving. Going to get a better place.

Wait.

LUCY

I got a better offer. Somebody that spends the night... He's even got a steady job.

Wait.

CHANEY

You got things all figured out.

LUCY

That's all you got to say.

Chaney looks at her.

Walks away.

CUT.

147 OPEN DOOR - GANDIL'S WAREHOUSE

Forming an archway.

(CONTINUED)

147 CONTINUED:

Empty.

Rain falling in the street beyond.

GUSTS of WIND.

148 WAREHOUSE - GARAGE

Rows of oyster tubs and shells.

The area between forms an open square.

149 OUTSIDE THE WAREHOUSE

Speed's Packard arrives.

Parks near the open door; Poe gets out, walks into the building.

150 POE

walking to the center.

Very quiet.

He looks around.

No Chaney.

151 LeBEAU AND DOTY

standing near the back stairway. LeBeau moves to Poe.

POE

Gentlemen...

LeBEAU

Good evening... How long is  
this going to take?

POE

We'll have to wait to find out.

Poe turns and looks toward the entrance.

LeBeau rejoins Doty.

They stand motionless.



152 POE

waiting.

CUT.

153 THE BLADE FAN

turning slowly.

154 CHANEY'S ROOM

NIGHT

Chaney, fully dressed, lies across the small bed.

Eyes closed -- they snap open, stare at the ceiling.

Rises from the bed.

The cat is nearby.

Chaney goes to the window.

Looks out.

Moves to the door.

Takes his coat and cap off the hook, puts them on.

Face totally deadpan.

Looks at cat.

Picks up his duffel bag.

Turns off the lights and goes out the door.

CUT.

155 ARCHWAY

Empty.

156 POE

standing, waiting.



160 CONTINUED:

POE

I'll do it.

Poe starts for the back stairway.

Looks up.

Glass windows of the office gleam above him.

He picks up a crescent wrench.

Poe throws it through the glass.

Wait.

No response.

161 DOORWAY

at the top of the stairs.

Jim Henry comes out.

Steamed.

Looks below.

POE

We're not going to wait here  
all night.

Jim Henry stares at Poe for a moment.

Sees Chaney.

Goes back inside.

162 CHANEY

leaning against a truck.

Still wet from the rain.

163 THE DOORWAY ABOVE

as it opens...

(CONTINUED)

163 CONTINUED:

Speed, Gandil, Jim Henry, Street and two Toughs.

They start down the concrete stairs.

Gandil hands LeBeau an envelope as he passes by.

164 ON THE FLOOR

Speed looks around.

Newly found freedom.

He walks over to Chaney and Poe.

SPEED

Thanks, pal.

Chaney nods.

SPEED

Just like old times.

POE

We did add a couple of new wrinkles.

Speed looks at Street.

CHANEY

You ever seen him fight.

SPEED

Never had the pleasure. I just know they didn't bring him all the way from Chicago to lose.

CHANEY

Let's do it.

Speed pivots, he's got the old flash back in his eyes.

SPEED

All right you big shot piss-ants, we're ready over here.

The two groups are at a standoff.

(CONTINUED)

164 CONTINUED:

GANDIL

Anybody else got something to say?

Street looks directly at Chaney.

STREET

Glad you could make it.

CHANEY

Things have a way of coming around.

Gandil flashes a roll.

GANDIL

You know, I envy you, Mr. Chaney. It must be exciting to bet more money than you can afford to lose.

CHANEY

Who's going to hold it.

Speed looks over at Gandil.

SPEED

He is.

Chaney hands Speed the scratch.

Speed takes the pot-bet over to Gandil.

Hands him the money.

SPEED

Chick... no matter what you do, you're always going to end up smelling like fish.

Speed turns away.

GANDIL

Close it up.

165 THE WAREHOUSE DOOR

ROARS downward.

(CONTINUED)

- 165 CONTINUED:  
Slams shut.  
Sealing off the building.
- 166 BETWEEN THE OYSTER BINS  
All nervous, except for the hitters.
- 167 CHANEY, SPEED AND POE  
standing close.  
Chaney turns his back.  
Takes off his cap and coat.  
Hands them to Speed.  
Turns again.  
Faces Street.  
The others move to the side.
- 168 STREET  
as big as ever.  
Hands like coal-hammers.
- 169 THE TWO  
Palms up.  
Ten feet between them.  
They stand motionless.  
Perfect calm.  
Hands at sides.  
Neither taking an offensive stance.  
Eyes holding on eyes.

(CONTINUED)

169 CONTINUED:

Chaney begins walking straight to his opponent.

Hands still at his sides.

He almost moves casually.

Almost.

Suddenly the two men become joined.

Fists raking one another.

Punch for punch.

Blow for blow.

Movement of arms with the speed of a lash.

170 BOTH MEN

cease.

Again stand motionless.

Look at one another.

Absolute quiet.

171 SPEED

whispers Jesus.

172 POE

Eyes shining.

173 LeBEAU AND DOTY

Apprehensive.

174 CHANEY AND STREET

join again.

(CONTINUED)

174 CONTINUED:

Raining blows.

Trip-hammer concussion.

Street grabs Chaney's left.

Slowly pulls him close.

Smashing with his own right.

Chaney blocking punches.

Still caught in the grip.

Suddenly all blows cease.

They test each other's strength.

The moment of decision.

Chaney twists free.

Again they stand facing one another.

Street moves with his right.

Chaney steps around it.

Left to the head.

Chaney now the artist.

Slides, hits, slides again.

Chaney's blows are coming fast, in combinations.

A flurry.

Street falls back.

Not a result of one blow.

All of them.

He continues to stagger backwards.

Moving on his heels.

Further backward.

(CONTINUED)



174 CONTINUED: (2)

Chaney watching.

Gandil nudges Jim Henry.

Jim Henry throws two palmers out to Street.

They clatter on the cement floor.

Street looks down at the shining pieces of metal.

Gandil takes a step toward his hitter.

GANDIL

Use them. Use them.

Speed jumps in.

SPEED

Foul. Get those palmers out of here.

GANDIL

Use them, Goddammit. Use them.  
Use them.

SPEED

Forfeit. Money's forfeited.  
What the hell do you think this is.

Street looks at Gandil.

Kicks the palmers away.

Moves back toward the center.

175 CENTER AREA

Chaney goes to finish his man.

Street gets off. Misses.

Chaney doesn't.

Head, body, body, head.

Hook, cross, hook again. Straight right.

(CONTINUED)

175 CONTINUED:

A finisher.

Street falls.

Tries to rise.

On his feet, moves forward.

Falls again.

Sprawled against a truck wheel.

His eyes are vacant.

Chaney goes to him.

Looks down then turns away.

Walks to Speed.

Puts on his coat and hat.

Nobody else moves.

Chaney crosses to Gandil.

CHANEY

You owe me money.

Gandil hands him the roll.

Poe and Speed come up next to Chaney.

GANDIL

You know you cost me a great  
deal, Mr. Chaney.

CHANEY

You'll live with it.

GANDIL

It's been a pleasure watching  
you work.

SPEED

Well, Chick, like the man says...  
the next best thing to playin'  
and winnin' is playin' and losin'.

(CONTINUED)

175 CONTINUED: (2)

GANDIL

I'll see you.

The trio start for the big door.

176 CHANEY, POE AND SPEED

by the big door.

It quietly rises.

They walk out into the rain.

CUT.

177 RIVERFRONT AREA

Near the ferry.

Speed's car drives up.

A long row of boxcars.

178 THE PACKARD

as it comes to a halt.

Speed and Poe in front, they get out.

Chaney steps out of the back seat.

SPEED

You sure this as far as you want  
to go.

CHANEY

Yeah. I'm sure.

Chaney reaches into his bag, pulls out a handful of  
money.

He walks over to Poe.

CHANEY

I got a cat back there at my  
place. I'd like you to take  
care of it for me.

(CONTINUED)

178 CONTINUED:

Gives Poe some greenbacks.

POE  
That's a lot of money.

Chaney looks over at Speed.

CHANEY  
You take care of Poe.

Gives Speed money.

SPEED  
For a man that came to town to  
make money, you're giving a lot  
of it away.

CHANEY  
You're forgetting about the in-  
betweens.

SPEED  
You sure filled those up.

Chaney puts a handful of cash back in his own pocket.

SPEED  
Where you heading.

CHANEY  
North.

Chaney starts away.

SPEED  
Chaney.

Chaney turns and looks.

SPEED  
We ought to say something.

Chaney smiles.

Walks into the darkness.

Doesn't look back.

(CONTINUED)

178 CONTINUED: (2)

Speed and Poe.

Get back inside the Packard.

SPEED

Maybe we ought to head on down to Miami. Get some action going down there. Hell of a town you know. Right on the ocean. That salt sea air is good for your health.

POE

Uh huh.

SPEED

He sure was something.

POE

Let's go get the cat.

SPEED

Yeah.

They drive off in the opposite direction and into the Black.

THE END