

"THE LADYKILLERS"

Screenplay by

Joel Coen and Ethan Coen

Based on the 1955 movie

"The Ladykillers"

by William Rose

EXT. MISSISSIPPI RIVER - DAY

A BOAT

Specifically, a garbage scow.

mighty
We see it from ON HIGH, chugging down the placid but
Mississippi.

sound,
Head credits play over COVERAGE of the garbage scow. No
except for an incongruously heroic score.

with
film
The COVERAGE is a little rough, coarse-grained; along
the overbearing score it almost suggests an industrial
rather than a feature.

One piece of sound -- the toot of the boat's horn -- is
obviously library. And not a new library either.

broad,
steaming
rise
squawks,
The garbage scow passes under a bridge spanning the
sluggish waters, and proceeds on to its landfill, a
river island. Disturbed gulls and other scavenger birds
from where they were picking through trash. Their
like the boat horn, are not quite believable as SYNC.
The head credits end as the anthemic music resolves.

EXT. SAUCIER, MISSISSIPPI - DAY

AN OLD HOUND DOG

front
It is
very
worship in
breeze

lies on the weather-grayed and -roughened planking of a porch. The porch is half-shaded from the noonday sun. quiet except for the chirr of heat bugs, close by, and, distant, many voices in chorus, engaged in divine a Baptist church sufficiently far away that vagaries of fan them in and out of audibility.

now
dog
whining,
his

We once again hear the toot of the scow's horn, distant and played as real, not slapdash effect. At this, the lifts his nose to catch the breeze, sniffs, and then, lowers his head to the floor and covers his snout with forepaws. He huffs briefly and goes to sleep.

We DRIFT UP to show that the dog is sleeping before the

SAUCIER WORM STORE

Your source for worms, lures, etcetera, etcetera...

structure
to the

We TRAVEL OVER TO REVEAL that the modest one-story houses two establishments; its other front door leads

SAUCIER MUNICIPAL BUILDING.

shows a
viewer a

A campaign sign in the window on the municipal side black man of late middle-age beaming and giving the thumbs-up:

Work.

RE-ELECT WAYNE WYNER SHERIFF/He Is Too Old to Go to

INT. SAUCIER MUNICIPAL BUILDING - DAY

stands

We hear snoring on top of a low, steady hissing sound. We are DRIFTING toward the door of the lock-up, which open. The small cell is empty, its bed neatly made.

A KEY

that We are ARCING slowly around a jailer's key on a ring hangs from a nail. The OFFSCREEN snoring and whirring continues.

spider The TRACK'S SHIFTING ANGLE now makes the light catch a web spun between the key and the wall.

POLICE SCANNER

steady We DRIFT across the face of the radio. The peaceful hissing jumps in louder at the CUT: it is uninterrupted: a transmissionless, crimeless, misdemeanorless idle radio hiss.

radio The snoring is also louder here. As we TRAVEL OFF the desktop. we are COMING ONTO a pair of feet propped up on the

They belong to SHERIFF WYNER, tipped back in his chair, fingers laced on his chest, head lolling forward.

ring As the MOVING CAMERA FINALLY ENDS on him, there is the of a telephone -- muffled, not present.

on a It nevertheless rouses the sheriff who almost strangles his snore as he awakes, and then rocks forward to pick up phone.

SHERIFF WYNER

Sheriff Wyner...

puzzled, The muffled ringing continues; the sheriff looks, muffled at the phone. Now the ringing stops and we hear a voice next door:

VOICE (O.S.)

Worms.

adjusts
the
The sheriff replaces the phone, leans back again,
his hat, and is about to go back to sleep when we hear
front door open.

momentary,
The sheriff looks and reacts with genuine, if
fear.

smile:
He manages to compose himself and give the intruder a

SHERIFF WYNER

Afternoon, Miz Munson.

dress
Entering is an elderly black woman in a floral print
and fruited bonnet.

MRS. MUNSON

Afternoon, Sheriff. You know the
Funthes boy?

SHERIFF WYNER

...Mackatee Funthes?

MRS. MUNSON

No no, WeeMack! Mackatee's eldest!

SHERIFF WYNER

Oh yeah, believe I do.

MRS. MUNSON

Well, he's a good boy but he done
gone down to the Costco in Pascagoula
and got hisself a blastah -- and he
been playin' that music!

Wyner is not sure where this is going:

SHERIFF WYNER

Uh-huh...

MRS. MUNSON

Loud!

SHERIFF WYNER

Well--

MRS. MUNSON

"Left my wallet in El Segundo!"

SHERIFF WYNER

He--

MRS. MUNSON

Songs like that!

SHERIFF WYNER

Uh-huh...

MRS. MUNSON

Hippity-hop music!

SHERIFF WYNER

I could--

MRS. MUNSON

You know they call it hippity-hop music, but it don't make me wanna go hippity-hop!

SHERIFF WYNER

No ma'am--

MRS. MUNSON

And Othar don't like that music neither!

Sheriff Wyner now displays an exaggerated solicitousness:

SHERIFF WYNER

It's been disturbin' Othar then, has it?

MRS. MUNSON

How could it help but do! That kind of music! You know what they call colored folks in them songs? Have you got any idea?

SHERIFF WYNER

I don't think I--

MRS. MUNSON

NIGGAZ! I don't wanna say the word. I won't say it twice, I'll tell you that. I say it one time.

SHERIFF WYNER

Yes ma'am.

MRS. MUNSON

In the course a swearin' out my complaint.

SHERIFF WYNER

Yes'm--

MRS. MUNSON

NIGGAZ! Two thousand years after Jesus! Thirty years after Martin Luther King! The age of Montel! Sweet lord a-mercy, izzat where we at?

SHERIFF WYNER

Mm-mm--

MRS. MUNSON

WeeMack down to Pascagoula buyin' a big thumpy stereo player?! So he can listen to that word in the house next to mine? Sheriff, you gotta help that boy!

SHERIFF WYNER

Help him?

MRS. MUNSON

You gotta take an innarest! EXTEND that helpin' hand!

SHERIFF WYNER

(dubious)

Well, we're here to help...

MRS. MUNSON

Well God bless ya. Don't wanna be tried and found wantin'.

SHERIFF WYNER

No ma'am.

MRS. MUNSON

Many many tunkalow parzen, Sheriff Wyner. Many many tunkalow parzen!

SHERIFF WYNER

Many what ma'am?

MRS. MUNSON

You have been tried and found wanting. Don't want that writin' on the wall!

SHERIFF WYNER

No ma'am--

MRS. MUNSON

Feast a Balthazar!

SHERIFF WYNER

Mm-hm.

MRS. MUNSON

John The Apostle said: Behold there is a stranger in our midst, come to destroy us!

SHERIFF WYNER

Yes ma'am.

EXT. SAUCIER MUNICIPAL BUILDING - DAY

paper fan Mrs. Munson closes the door behind her. She wags a
and mutters:

MRS. MUNSON

He's a good man. Just needs instruction. Dog, you in peoples' way.

The dog stirs with a whine and ambles off.

EXT. MUNSON HOUSE - DAY

street With a neatly tended garden. It is the last house on a
beyond of other similarly modest but well maintained homes;
beyond it the street disappears down a bluff. The empty space
an suggests a wide river, and indeed we can see the top of
rise. anchored, gaudily painted paddle-boat poking over the
of The paddle-boat is apparently anchored at the near bank
the river.

garden Mrs. Munson is entering by the gate. She stops in the
perfect and stoops to pull a tiny weed marring the otherwise
row of flowers.

I/E. MUNSON HOUSE - FOYER - DAY

bell
leg.
Mrs. Munson lets herself in. A cat lopes up to her, the
around its neck tinkling, and leans mewing into her

MRS. MUNSON

You need somethin' to eat, Angel?

INT. MUNSON HOUSE - KITCHEN - DAY

cat
Mrs. Munson hand-cranks a can opener around a tin of
food.

MRS. MUNSON

Mm... gizzards...

into
cover
The cat paces back and forth between her legs, leaning
them and purring, responding to the snap of tin as the
comes off the can.

gelatinous
The can contains cubed processed gizzard in a
medium like the stuff that clings to gefilte fish.

INT. MUNSON HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

looking
mustache
below
Above the fireplace is an oil portrait of a serious-
black man of late middle-age with a neatly groomed
starting to gray. A couple of candles sit on the mantel
the portrait, giving it the semblance of a shrine.

Mrs. Munson enters and lights the candles.

MRS. MUNSON

Othar, I went'n complained about
WeeMack, I hope it'll do some good.
That boy hangin' by a thread! Over
the pit! Fiery pit! "I Left My Wallet
in El Segundo"!

up
She shakes out the match and sits in a rocker and takes
her knitting. As she sits she gives an audible groan.

MRS. MUNSON

...Sixty-seven years of life, forty-six years of marriage, you mean to tell me you never one time suffered from piles? It's the human condition, most humans anyway. Like that ball player said: world's got two kinds of folks -- them that's got piles and them that's gonna get 'em. But you was always healthy as an ox...

There is the distant moan of a riverboat horn.

MRS. MUNSON

...Passed on before you got piles. Mmmmmhmm. Thank the Lord you wasn't sick. You don't wanna sicken 'n die. No, you wanna pass nice 'n peaceful... go to sleep one night, wake up in the glory land... woof...

the
the
A gust of wind hums under the eaves; the candles below
portrait flicker. As Mrs. Munson looks around the room,
vaguely towards the ceiling, sensing a negative aura,
cat arches its back and hisses.

At this moment the doorbell rings.

MRS. MUNSON

...Well who's that now, Pickles?

She grunts as she hoists herself out of the chair.

I/E. MUNSON HOUSE - FOYER - NIGHT

She opens the door--

A draft--

INT. MUNSON HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

up
The candles below the portrait of Othar go out, sending
thin wisps of smoke.

I/E. MUNSON HOUSE - FOYER - NIGHT

the
The cat shrieks and bolts out the door, past the man on
stoop: GOLDTHWAIT HIGGINSON DORR, III.

hat
circles
courtly,

He is a middle-aged Southern gentleman wearing a panama
and a cape over a cream-colored suit. He has dark
under his eyes. The smile he attempts, mournful yet
is wiped away by:

MRS. MUNSON

PICKLES!

DORR

Ma'am?

MRS. MUNSON

Go get 'im!

DORR

I do beg your pardon?

MRS. MUNSON

Go get Pickles, I didn't let 'im
out!

DORR

(tasting the name)

Pickles...

EXT. MUNSON HOUSE - NIGHT

Dorr walks down the stoop followed by the old lady.

MRS. MUNSON

Oh, he's up the tree again. Your
gonna have to shimmy on up.

DORR

I am so terribly sorry, madam. But
won't the feline eventually tire of
his lonely perch and, pining for his
master's affection, return on his
own initiative?

MRS. MUNSON

Huh? No, he won't come down less you
fetch him. He'd set there til Gabriel
blows his horn if someone didn't
shimmy up. Up with you now!

DORR

Well then couldn't we perhaps offer

him kitty treats and enticements, or if not foodstuffs perhaps squeaky little toys of the kind formerly manufactured in Hong Kong but now produced in the other so-called "Little Tigers"...

His fingers form the quotes.

DORR

...of the Pacific Rim? The point bein', do we have to actually ascend the tree--

MRS. MUNSON

Look, I don't want no doubletalk. If you ain't gonna fetch him down I guess I gotta call the po-lice...

DORR

Police...

His face darkens.

MRS. MUNSON

They ain't gonna be happy. Every time they come fetch him down they swear they won't do it no more...

the
Dorr casts his hat aside and starts awkwardly climbing tree. He gasps as he climbs:

DORR

No need to call the authorities. I did this often as a youth -- why, I was a positive lemur... Here, kitty...

The cat backs away down a branch, arching its back and hissing.

MRS. MUNSON

Don't upset him, now!

Dorr, on his stomach, inches after the cat, grunting:

DORR

I wouldn't dream of it... harmless little felix domesticus... Come to **G.H...**

into
the
ground.

The branch breaks, hinging down to slam Dorr face-first
the trunk, from where he drops the rest of the way to

INT. MUNSON HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

bemusedly
down on us.

Othar's portrait, upside-down, seems to be looking

damp
the
picture.

An OBJECTIVE ANGLE shows Dorr lying on the couch, a
washcloth on his forehead, eyes rolled back to look at

his
feet out to sit up and accept the tea.

Mrs. Munson is entering with a cup of tea. Dorr swings

DORR

I thank you, madam, for your act of
kindness.

MRS. MUNSON

Well you let him out.

DORR

I certainly did and I do apologize
no end. Allow me to present myself,
uh, formally: Goldthwait Higginson
Dorr, Ph.D.

MRS. MUNSON

What, like Elmer?

DORR

Beg your pardon, ma'am?

MRS. MUNSON

Fudd?

DORR

No no, Ph.D. is a mark of academic
attainment. It is a degree of higher
learning bestowed, in my case, in
recognition of my mastery of the
antique languages of Latin and Greek.
I also hold a number of other advanced
degrees including the baccalaureate

from a school in Paris, France, called the Sorbonne.

Munson chuckles.

MRS. MUNSON

Sore bone, well I guess that's appropriate. You ever study at Bob Jones University?

DORR

I have not had that privilege.

MRS. MUNSON

It's a bible school, only the finest in the country. I send them five dollars every month.

DORR

That's very gener--

MRS. MUNSON

I'm on their mailing list. I'm an Angel.

DORR

Indeed.

MRS. MUNSON

They list my name in the newsletter, every issue. I got the literature here, you wanna examine it.

DORR

Perhaps when my head has recovered from its... buffeting. Mrs. Munson, are you at all curious as to why I darkened your door, as the expression has it, on this lovely camelia-scented morn?

MRS. MUNSON

I was wondering, til you let Pickles out. Then in all the excitement--

DORR

I quite understand. The fact is that I saw the sign on your window advertising a room to let, and it is the only such sign among the houses of this charming, charming street.

MRS. MUNSON

Yeah, I got a room. I'm lookin' for a quiet tenant. Fifteen dollars a week

DORR

I quite understand. Madam, you are addressing a man who is quiet -- and yet not quiet, if I may offer a riddle...

He sets down the teacup and rises.

DORR

...Perhaps you can show me the room, Mrs. Munson, and allow me to explain.

MRS. MUNSON

Well you can see the room, but I don't like double-talk.

Mrs. Munson precedes him...

INT. MUNSON HOUSE - STAIRCASE - NIGHT

...up the stairs.

DORR

You see, madam, I am currently on sabbatical from the institution where I teach -- the University of Mississippi at Hattiesburg. I am taking a year off to indulge my passion -- I don't believe that is too strong a word -- for the music of the Renaissance. I perform in -- and have the honor of directing -- a period instrument ensemble that performs at Renaissance fairs and other cultural fora...

INT. MUNSON HOUSE - DORR'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

brass
chintz
They enter a small bedroom. There is a small bed on a frame, a chair, a wash basin, and cheerful yellow drapes on the window. Dorr appreciatively takes it in.

DORR

...thoo-out central and southern Mississippi. We perform on the

instruments for which the music was originally composed, in the belief that... that... Why, this is lovely...

MRS. MUNSON

Wait a minute. You got some kind of band?

Dorr once again wiggles quotes with his fingers:

DORR

The word "band" would be, in this context, something of an anachronism. Though we do play together -- hence the word "ensemble" -- the nature of the music is such that one would hesitate to apply the epithet "band" with its connotations of jangling rhythm and ear-popping amplification.

MRS. MUNSON

So you don't play hippity-hop, "I Left My Wallet in El Segundo," songs with the titles spelt all funny?

DORR

Madam, I shudder. I quake. The revulsion I feel for modern popular music, and all other manifestations of contemporary decay, is, I have no doubt, the equal of y'own. Why, we play music that was composed to the greater glory of God. Devotional music. Church music.

MRS. MUNSON

Gospel music?

DORR

Well-inspired by the gospels, certainly. The vintage, of course, is no more recent than the Rococo.

MRS. MUNSON

Rococo, huh? Well, I guess that'd be okay.

DORR

But I certainly don't propose to inflict our rehearsals on you. May I enquire -- do you have a root cellar?

INT. MUNSON HOUSE - CELLAR - NIGHT

order
Munson.
Dorr ducks while descending the steep, narrow stair in
to avoid an overhead beam. He is followed by Mrs.

DORR

Yes, yes, yes, this looks promising...

He pulls on a hanging string to light a bare bulb
overhead.

MRS. MUNSON

Little dank, ain't it?

DORR

Oh, indeed, but that only improves
the acoustics...

He experimentally claps his hands.

DORR

...Marvelous. These earthen walls
are ideal for baffling the higher
registers of the, uh, lute and, uh,
sackbutt. That's why so much music
of the cinquecento was played in
crypts and catacombs. Yes, this will
do nicely...

remains
He dry-washes his hands with enthusiasm, but his tone
mournful.

DORR

...This is perfect. This is more
than perfect. I can scarcely contain
my glee.

MRS. MUNSON

You containing it okay.

billfold:
He starts to peel cash out of a large, well-worn

DORR

Allow me to pay you a week in advance.
Allow me to pay you two weeks in
advance. Allow me to pay you a month
in advance. I cannot countenance the
thought of these charming apartments

being tenanted by someone
unappreciative of their special je
ne sais quoi.

MRS. MUNSON

That would be a shame.

INT. CASINO - DAY

TRACKING ON A GARBAGE CART

Wallet in
On the cart is a boombox. It is playing "I Left My
El Segundo."

It is being pushed through a casino empty of customers.
As the cart stops and a wastebasket is emptied into it:

VOICE (V.O.)

You gotta peel this shit out sticks
to the bottom.

WIDER

MACKATEE
shows two youngish black men in the khaki uniforms of
custodians. Emptying the wastebasket is WEEMACK-
FUNTHES. He is instructing GAWAIN MACSAM.

WEEMACK

...You wouldn't believe this shit,
sometimes even out here on the casino
floor you gonna find sanitary napkin
shit stuck there, Tucks, I don't
know what the fuck people do while
they're gambling here man.

GAWAIN

I ain't peelin' funky shit with my
human hands, man. That's a
prescription for disease and viruses
and shit, attackin' y'insides.

which is
The
at
their
As they roll on we see more of the gambling floor,
on something less than the scale of a Las Vegas casino.
floor is not yet open and dealers stack and count chips
the tables, pit bosses with clipboards looking over

garters,
shoulders. Other dealers strap on visors and sleeve
preparing to work.

WEEMACK

You gotta do it. Mr. Gudge checks
everything. Man is a motherfuck.
Shit -- looka this.

next
After a furtive look around he plucks a chip from the
wastebasket and slips it in his pocket.

WEEMACK

...You keep an eye out, man. I found
a hundred-dollar chip once.

GAWAIN

Fuck that, man. I ain't pawin' through
used Tucks for a fi' dollar chip.

WEEMACK

I said it was a hundred.

GAWAIN

Man, your guts gonna turn to soup'n
leak outcha fuckin' asshole.

SERVICE HALL

The cart jitters loudly on the dimpled plastic floor.

WEEMACK

This tunnel leads back onto land. To
the office for all the people work
for Mannex. Mannex Corporation. Owns
the Lady Luck 'n three other boats...

INT. CASINO - SERVICE HALL - DAY

office
door.
The two men are entering a windowless fluorescent-lit
area. A row of wooden office doors and one heavy steel

WEEMACK

...This is where they think on their
corporate shit, Gudge and them.

He stops to empty a wastebasket.

WEEMACK

...The lights is ugly but it ain't
as many Tucks.

He bangs on the steel door:

WEEMACK

...YO, motherfuck! Lemme in!

MUFFLED VOICE (O.S.)

What's the password?

WEEMACK

Kiss my ass.

swings
We hear a deep chuckle and the door, steel reinforced,
open.

INT. CASINO - COUNTING ROOM - DAY

The two men enter, WeeMack nodding at the security man
(ELRON).

WEEMACK

This is where they count the dough.
You try to take any of it Elron there
shoot your ass.

fast-
Again the security man chuckles. WeeMack picks up some
food wrappers.

WEEMACK

...This place is a fuckin' pigsty.
You a pig, man, nothin' but a squeaky
ol' motherfuckin' pig...

chuckles
Elron chuckles. He is an enormously fat man; his
come from deep, deep in his chest.

WEEMACK

...You got fuckin' Kocoa Krispies in
ya uniform man, still got breakfast
there and you eatin' motherfuckin'
lunch.

shirt,
Elron uses one hand to swipe crumbs off his uniform
chuckling.

WEEMACK

...You a disgrace before motherfuckin'
God...

Elron chuckles.

WEEMACK

...You a motherfuck-- oh, hello Mr.
Gudge, how we be this mornin'?

A man in a buttoned white shirt nods at him.

GUDGE

Funthes. How's the new man?

WEEMACK

He is a cleaning motherfucker, man!

GUDGE

Is that a fact.

INT. SOUNDSTAGE - SMOKING FIELD SET - DAY

HIGH ANGLE

gnarled
desolate
waste.

It is a ruin of a field; charred trees point bare and
limbs toward a gray sky; smoke drifts across the

background.
avidly

Something is bounding towards us from the deep
We BOOM DOWN as it approaches: a bulldog, running
toward us on its stumpy little legs.

An OFFSCREEN male voice (CLARK PANCAKE):

PANCAKE (O.S.)

One, Mountain!

dog
neck

There is an explosion that showers dirt in front of the
and makes it veer. Something strapped around the dog's
bounces as he runs.

PANCAKE

...Scrub two! Scrub three! Four,
Mountain!

once
around

Another explosion makes the dog veer back so that it again bears on us. The thing that has been bouncing its neck flies off.

just
bowl
Ration

Our CONTINUING BOOM DOWN has brought us to ground level as the dog arrives in front of us to feed at a dog food bowl in the foreground. The yellow plastic bowl has a K-Ration logo facing us.

We hear another OFFSCREEN voice (DIRECTOR):

DIRECTOR (O.S.)

Cut, goddamnit. His canteen fell off.

the
from the

The Director's feet enter in the foreground. He hooks the dog's belly with one foot and hoists it roughly away from the bowl. We

CUT

UP TO:

The DIRECTOR. He scowls down at the animal.

DIRECTOR

...Props!

pockets, and
belt

A man in a Hemingway field-jacket with multiple pockets, and also a loaded utility belt, trots up toward him, his belt jangling as he runs. This is CLARK PANCAKE.

fifties. He
multi-
Hemingway

Pancake is a florid beer-bellied man in his late fifties. He has a full blond-grey Grizzly Adams beard and wears multi-pocketed shorts that form an ensemble with his Hemingway jacket.

The director is angry.

DIRECTOR

...The goddamn thing's canteen fell

off. It would have been a good take.

Pancake is unperturbed.

PANCAKE

Okay. Okay. We're prepared for that...

He hits a button on the radio on his belt and talks
into his
headset:

PANCAKE

... Mountain, bring Otto with the
apparatus.

PULLING ANOTHER BULLDOG

He strains at his lead, muscling forward as quickly as
his
minder and his own stumpy little legs will allow.

He peers through the two goggly eyeholes of an antique
leather
gas mask, its pignose breathing apparatus covering his
own
snout. His phlegmy breathing is amplified by the
device.

We TILT UP the lead to show his minder, MOUNTAIN GIRL.
She
is a solid woman in her late forties with freckles
beginning
to merge into age spots. Her long straw-colored hair is
tightly braided into Heidi pigtails bound with red
ribbon.
Otherwise her dress is unadorned.

The director squints at the dog.

DIRECTOR

What the hell is this?

Pancake's manner is professorial:

PANCAKE

World War I vintage gas mask. It's
authentic. Strapped on, of course,
so it can't fall off. The animal is
free to be as active as he wants,
doesn't inhibit his movement, and I
think it really sells the whole
doughboy thing--

DIRECTOR

It looks like a fucking joke.

not Pancake stares at the director for a moment and, though
doing anything, makes a sound of concentrated effort:

PANCAKE

...Nnnnrnff!

The director squints at him:

DIRECTOR

What?

Pancake comes out of his trance, or whatever it was:

PANCAKE

No, nothing, uh... you're absolutely
right, the gas mask is a whimsical
concept--

DIRECTOR

How the hell does it eat when it
gets to the Kennel Rations?

breathing The dog looks up from person to person as each speaks,
twisting its neck to peer through the eyeholes. Its
is growing louder.

PANCAKE

Well, you're absolutely right--

DIRECTOR

Don't let the client see this.

PANCAKE

Of course not, that would be
inappropriate--

DIRECTOR

Or the Humane fucker.

PANCAKE

No no--

The dog gets down on its knees, slowly, like a camel,
breathing ever more loudly.

DIRECTOR

They'll shut the fucking spot down,
Pancake. Put the goddamn canteen
back on. That says he's a soldier.
Dented tin canteen. Just tie the
damn thing to his collar.

The dog flops over into the mud.

PANCAKE

Easiest thing in the world. I just
thought -- but the canteen is much
better. Good concept. Let's go with
that--

DIRECTOR

What's he doing?

The dog has started to convulse.

PANCAKE

Well, he's uh... Just breathe
normally, Otto.

DIRECTOR

The fucking dog can't breathe.

PANCAKE

Oh, he can breathe, that thing is --
just breathe normally, Otto.

The dog's breath is rasping and horrible.

DIRECTOR

The fucking dog cannot breathe! Get
that fucking thing off him!

PANCAKE

Of course. Easiest thing in the world.

He stoops and fiddles at the straps.

PANCAKE

...It's on good and tight, I, uh...
Just breathe normally, Otto.

He starts thumping at his pockets.

DIRECTOR

Get the fucking thing off him!

PANCAKE

Don't have my Leatherman. Mountain!

Give me your Leatherman! Chop chop!

DIRECTOR

Get the fucking thing off him! Chitra, make sure the Humane fucker doesn't come over here! Bring him to craft services!

As he makes to scoop up the dog:

PANCAKE

Good idea! Ice water, treats--

DIRECTOR

Not the dog, you idiot! The Humane fucker! Distract him!

PANCAKE

Right! Of course!

He goes back to work on the mask.

DIRECTOR

Oh my god, he's bleeding!

PANCAKE

No, that's me -- I -- the Leatherman... here we go.

gas
His hand gouging blood, he finally manages to get the mask off.

barks
A crowd is starting to gather and gape. The director at a grip:

DIRECTOR

Put up a couple solids here -- I don't want the client seeing this!

Pancake thumps on the inert dog's chest.

PANCAKE

Come on, Otto!

DIRECTOR

Otto is fucking dead!

PANCAKE

Mountain, have electric run me a stinger! Don't give up on me, Otto!

Mountain, I need two live leads!

More people crowd in to look.

MOUNTAIN GIRL

Clark, the gennie's a hundred yards away!

PANCAKE

Goddamnit! Otto's gonna have brain damage in about ninety seconds! Okay!

slobbered
He pulls the dog's lips back, exposing its teeth and tongue.

PANCAKE

...Kiss of life!

the
He sucks in a deep breath and starts mouth-to-mouthing beast.

EXT. FOOTBALL FIELD - DAY

POV

hear
Just
a
We are looking out from inside a football helmet; we the super-present breathing of the helmet's occupant. over the breathing we can hear the muffled shouting of snap count.

call
action.
We are in a crouch position looking downfield. At the of "Hike!" we and everyone on the field spring into

louder. A
We sprint downfield, the breathing becoming even very big person downfield is sprinting toward us.

around
someone
After several yards, still on the move, we PAN quickly to look back for the quarterback. Barely visible among converging bodies, he is releasing the football toward else.

downfield

--

the

labored

player

extends a

Easing up on the run we PAN BACK around to look just as the oncoming defender is upon us and -- CRUNCH slams into us. A STROBING PAN leaves us looking up at sky. Our loud breathing has stopped.

After a long beat the breathing resumes with a raggedy inhale. It continues irregularly. Another helmeted appears above us to peer down into our helmet. He hand to help us up.

HUDDLE

We are looking back and forth around the circle at our gathered teammates.

QUARTERBACK

Delta thirty-seven. On four!

All, with a simultaneous hand clap:

TEAM

Huh!

LINE OF SCRIMMAGE

Lined up opposite us is a snarling defender.

shouted

Once again, over loud breathing, we can just hear the count.

lunging

horrific

effort

At "Hike!" we straighten to meet the defensive lineman at us. His mouthpiece clatters against ours and in CLOSE-UP he strains against us, his animal gurgles of audible over our own ragged breath.

back and

ground,

With a primal roar from the defenseman our POV tips up, BOOMING DOWN to stop with a CRUNCH against the staring up. Once again our breathing has stopped.

looming

After a beat a foot is planted on our helmet as a
running back steps on us in his charge downfield. He is
pursued by defenders some of whom leap over us and some
whom by the sound of it step on various body parts.

of

HUDDLE

The same back-and-forth PAN.

QUARTERBACK

Okay, Epsilon twenty-two! You the
man!... Hey! BUTTHEAD!

This brings our wandering attention PANNING back to the
quarterback:

QUARTERBACK

You the man!

A very, very present VOICE (HUDSON):

HUDSON (O.S.)

Me the man?

TEAM

Huh!

LINE OF SCRIMMAGE

The same breathing and count.

On "Hike!" we sprint downfield.

The same distant defender sprinting toward us.

We hear low but very present a dismayed:

HUDSON (O.S.)

Unh... oh no...

we

Our breathing is torn by rasping wheezes of effort as
continue to run.

We look back.

Every player is looking directly at us.

too

A huge spiralling football coming at us -- too close,

soon -- and--

BONK!

It bounces off our mouth guard and flies up.

HUDSON (O.S.)

...shit...

We are looking forward just as

CRUNCH!

We are hit by the defender.

We once again land face-up.

defender Very steeply FORESHORTENED, right over us, we see the juggling the live ball.

ball With a moan, our own hand reaches weakly up towards the and the high, distant defender.

and He finally gathers in the ball and securely tucks it, starts back upfield.

in We climb wearily to our feet. We look back upfield just dance in time to see the defender start an elaborate victory hand the end zone. He pauses for a moment to point a gloved directly at us, then resumes his strut.

attention Shouting from the sidelines brings our PANNING over.

and The coach, face twisted with fury, is shouting at us using his clipboard to wave us off the field.

We trot toward the sidelines.

in All of our teammates stare at us -- some in shock, some anger, some in pity.

ourself.
helmet

At the sideline bench our POV swings round as we seat
A hand reaches up to the mouth guard to pull off the
and we

MATCH

CUT TO:

finishes
entire

Our first OBJECTIVE SHOT as the player (HUDSON)
pulling off his helmet. He is a big blond boy. His
body, including his face, is solidly built.

An offscreen Voice:

COACH (O.S.)

Hudson!

The boy, Hudson, turns to look, and we cut to one last

POV

The COACH is striding up, swinging his clipboard at the
camera: with a loud CRUNCH! it brings on:

BLACK

EXT. MINI-MALL / HI-HO DONUT - DAY

HIGH ANGLE

Seven-
Donut

It is a typical sunbaked concrete strip mall with a
Eleven, a launderette, and a Hi-Ho Donut. The Hi-Ho
sign shows a pink donut with sprinkles and says in much
smaller lettering: And Croissants.

music.
front
a

A beat-up Impala pulls into the lot, pulsing hip-hop
After a long rumbling idle the ignition is killed. Both
doors open. Two BLACK KIDS get out and look around with
manner that is if anything too casual.

INT. HI-HO DONUT - DAY

Glass

There is faint muzak and loud air-conditioner hum.

FANCIES.
is
eaten.

cases display donuts identified as GLAZED, JELLY, and
Fancies ooze yellow goo. The jelly on the jelly donuts
developing a crust of age. The glazed also look moth-

the
to the
protrudes.

One customer, a disheveled older man, sits at one of
little formica tables staring into a coffee cup. Next
coffee is a brown paper bag from which a straw

a
Behind the counter is a middle-aged VIETNAMESE WOMAN in
neat white blouse.

The two youths enter pulling out enormous handguns from
underneath their windbreakers.

YOUTH #1

All right Dragon Lady, give us all
the fuckin' money!

The woman stares blankly.

YOUTH #1

We want that donut money!

VIETNAMESE WOMAN

Yao gin nyap!

aged
suit.
eyeglasses.
cigarette.

A man appears from the kitchen in back. He is a middle-
Vietnamese gentleman in a crisply pressed khaki leisure
An ascot is knotted at his neck. He wears aviator
In his mouth smolders a half-burned-down filterless
This, we shall learn later, is THE GENERAL.

YOUTH #2

Okay papa-san, we want that donut
money.

YOUTH #1

And we ain't fuckin' around, Mr. Hi-
Ho.

VIETNAMESE WOMAN

Hi-Ho.

The two youths look at her briefly. Nothing else is forthcoming.

The drunk looks up from his paper bag.

YOUTH #2

Look, this fuckin' thing, it ain't complicated. You give us all the fuckin money, you don't get shot in the head, you make more donuts, get more money. That's how it works, see?

seems The General stares at him. As with his wife, none of it to register; unlike his wife, he seems unperturbed.

YOUTH #1

Give us the money!

He is pointing the gun directly at the General's head.

YOUTH #1

...You got three fuckin' seconds. You understand one-two-three? I'm gonna count one-two-three and then shoot. Okay? Three sec-- huh!

inside The General has swung his fist up to hook two fingers the youth's nostrils. His gun clatters to the floor. The fingers are way, way up his nose. Only one knuckle shows on each finger.

The youth is staring cross-eyed at his own nose.

His friend is also stupefied.

YOUTH #1

(very nasal)

His fingers are way the fuck up my nose.

YOUTH #2

GET... YA FINGAS... OUT... THE MAN'S... NOSE!

The
The General still impassively sucks on his cigarette.
first youth is on the verge of tears:

YOUTH #1

I think they're in my brain, man...

YOUTH #2

MOTHERFUCK!

He raises his gun to start firing.

other
As he does so the General uses his hook-hold on the
youth's nose to slam his head backwards, down into some
Fancies.

lady
The door opens and a customer walks in, a semi-elderly
with a cane.

door,
pressed
Vietnamese
Youth #2, eyes rolling, wildly swings to cover the
then back to the General who has his friend's head
into the Fancies, then uncertainly over to the
woman who is loudly yelling at him in Vietnamese.

General
and
Cigarette still dangling from his lower lip, the
calmly plucks a pot of coffee from the coffee warmer
tosses it into Youth #2's face.

Youth #2 screams.

EXT. HI-HO DONUT - DAY

HIGH ANGLE

stumbles
his
The car is still pulsing hip-hop music. Youth #2
out of the Hi-Ho, hands covering his face and sinks to
knees.

INT. HI-HO DONUT - DAY

the
The General now has the first youth's face pressed into

the
Fancies from behind. Without disturbing his smoking,
General repeatedly kicks the youth in the ass.

wheeling a
His wife, muttering irritably in Vietnamese, is
water bucket and mop to where the floor is covered with
coffee.

INT. CHURCH - DAY

worship. It
At the CUT many voices are swelling in a song of
energy.
is a black Baptist church, and the music has great

takes the
The white-robed choir finishes singing; a preacher
podium.

PREACHER

I know you all remember that when
Moses came down the mountain, carrying
the word a God, come down that Sinai
peak, he caught those Israelites red-
handed. What he catch 'em doin'? He
caught 'em worshipping a golden calf.

Shouts of "That's right!"

PREACHER

...He caught 'em with their backs
turned on God!

More shouts of "That's right!"

PREACHER

...He caught 'em worshipping a FALSE
God! A God of EARTHLY things! He
caught them Israelites in DECLINE!

"He caught 'em!"

PREACHER

...Because backslidin' is DECLINE,
brothers and sisters! You hear talk
these days, and I know you've heard
this talk, you hear talk of DECLINE,
well all that means is we done turned
our back on God!

"That's right!"

PREACHER

...People say civilization doin'
this, civilization doin' that,
civilization in DECLINE! Well it
ain't no civilization! It ain't no
them! It's US, brothers and sisters!

"Amen!"

We are TRACKING among the congregants,
disproportionately
women, mostly of middle age and elderly, mostly wearing
elaborate go-to-church hats.

PREACHER

...It's what's in our hearts, each
and every one of us when we like
them Israelites! Slidin' awa-a-a-ay
down that Godly slope, slippin' and
slidin' toward the mire and muck a
the stinkhole of greed -- that's
DECLINE!

"That's decline!"

wearing,
adorned
The CONTINUING TRACK brings us onto Mrs. Munson,
like most of her peers, an oversized hat; hers is
with a great deal of plastic fruit.

PREACHER

...And what did Moses do when he saw
those declinin' backslidin' never-
mindin' sinners?

"What he do?"

PREACHER

...Moses SMOTE those sinners in his
wrath yes he did!

"Yes he did!"

PREACHER

...Y'all know what smote is! I smite!
You smite! He smites! We done smote!

"That's right!"

PREACHER

...To smite is to go UPSIDE the head!

"Uh-huh!"

PREACHER

...Because sometimes, brothers and sisters, that is the ONLY way!

"Yes it is!"

PREACHER

...To smite is to reMIND! We got to STOP that decline! And scramble back UP to the face a the almighty Gyod!

"Amen!"

PREACHER

...'Stead a worshipping' that GOLDEN calf, that earthly TRASH on that GARBAGE island! That GARBAGE island in that shadowland WAY outside the Kingdom a God!

"Way outside!"

PREACHER

...That GARBAGE island where scavenger birds feast on the bones a the backslidin' damned!

"Yes they do!"

PREACHER

...And so, let us pray...

EXT. CHURCH - DAY

stands
It is a white clapboard country church. The preacher at the door chatting with the congregants filing out.

WOMAN #1

You preach a wonderful sermon, Brother Cleothus.

PREACHER

Why thank you, Sister Rose.

MRS. MUNSON

That man has a lot to say.

WOMAN #1

Yes he does.

MRS. MUNSON

And every word of it the truth.

WOMAN #2

Mm-mm. Jesus well pleased with him.

WOMAN #3

Deed he is.

PREACHER

Oh now ladies...

WOMAN #3

Pleased as he can be.

WOMAN #1

Mm-mm.

MRS. MUNSON

Stout, too.

WOMAN #1

Mm-mm.

PREACHER

Oh now you gracious ladies.

INT. MUNSON HOUSE - KITCHEN - DAY

dollar
does
so:

Mrs. Munson is at the kitchen table. She folds a five
bill into a sheet of paper, raising her voice as she

MRS. MUNSON

It was a good sermon. That man has a
lot to say.

INT. MUNSON HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - DAY

He
does not answer.

We have CUT to the portrait of Othar over the mantel.

From the kitchen:

MRS. MUNSON'S VOICE (O.S.)

...Stout, too. It would've been a

comfort to you...

INT. MUNSON HOUSE - KITCHEN - DAY

Bob Mrs. Munson has stuffed the paper-enclosed bill into an envelope, which she is now laboriously addressing to Jones University.

MRS. MUNSON

And the choir was all in good voice.
Mm-mm-

There is a knock at the door.

MRS. MUNSON

...Who could that--

The cat yowls and hisses.

I/E. MUNSON HOUSE - FOYER - DAY

his As Mrs. Munson swings open the door.
G.H. Dorr stands on the stoop mournfully dry-washing his hands and obsequiously ducking his head.

DORR

My dear Mrs. Munson, I do so hope this is not an inopportune time for our first practice--

MRS. MUNSON

Somebody die?

DORR

I beg your-- Oh!

parked He looks back at the long black vintage Lincoln hearse at the curb behind him.

DORR

...No no, no bereavement, though it is so kind of you to enquire. No, the hearse is simply a vehicle commodious enough to accommodate all of the members of our ensemble. And of course our instruments, contrived in an age ignorant of miniaturization...

He turns and gestures at the vehicle.

driver's

At his sign, Gawain, the custodian, emerges from the side.

khaki

Clark Pancake emerges from the front passenger side.

lips,

The General, wearing a different but equally pressed suit and ascot, and with a smoking cigarette in his mouth, emerges from a back door.

hatch to

Gawain goes to the back of the hearse and opens its hatch to let out Lump Hudson, the football player.

instrument

Lump helps unload five large and oddly shaped

its

cases, each man taking one except for Lump himself, who carries two. As the parade of losers and misfits winds way up the walk:

DORR

...Let me introduce you to my friends, my colleagues, these devoted and passionate musicians... This is Gawain MacSam, our bassoonist...

Gawain nods as he passes by.

DORR

...General Nguyen Pham Doc, viola da gamba...

MRS. MUNSON

No smoking in this house.

as he

The General tosses his cigarette away and bows stiffly as he passes.

GENERAL

So sorry.

DORR

...Clark Pancake -- a multi-instrumentalist, but with his remarkable embosser Clark specializes

in wind instruments, and is especially accomplished on the French horn...

He nods, passes.

DORR

...And, finally, Aloysius "Lump" Hudson. Lump is our sackbuttist and -- thank you, Lump -- I see you've also brought my fiddle...

As he hands Dorr the violin case:

LUMP

Here's your fiddle, Doctor.

Mrs. Munson sizes up the group.

MRS. MUNSON

You ain't gonna make a racket, are ya?

DORR

Oh no. Oh no no no no no. No, we shall recuse ourselves to the basement where we shall be -- I think here the expression is uniquely appropriate...

He gives a sickly smile.

DORR

...as quiet as the crypt.

MRS. MUNSON

Hmph.

INT. MUNSON HOUSE - CELLAR - DAY

from
smoke
The General stands stock still, his nose an inch away
the earthen wall, studying it, squinting through the
of the cigarette pinched between his lips.

out
loads
The rest of the men are opening their cases and taking
the instruments. Gawain's case contains, however, not a
musical instrument but a boombox and several tapes. He
one of the tapes into the machine.

DORR

What do you think, General? Present any problems?

give
nothing.

After a beat the General turns away from the wall to Dorr a look into which one might read anything, or

filled

Gawain hits play on the boombox and the cellar is with the fussy strains of baroque chamber music.
Dorr nods.

DORR

...Good then.

He spreads a map open on the sackbutt case.

DORR

...All right, gentlemen, why don't we all crowd around and go over the plan.

north-south
and

The biggest feature on the map is a wavy, roughly pair of lines: a river. A boat icon sits at one edge from it a dotted rectangle extends inland.

Dorr taps at the boat icon with his fiddle bow.

DORR

...This, gentlemen, is the Lady Luck, gambling den, cash cow, Sodom of the Mississippi delta -- and the focus of our little exercise. Here is Orchard Street...

rectangle
house
those

He is tracing a street that parallels the dotted extending from the boat. The street is lined by small icons on either side; the bow comes to rest on one of icons.

DORR

...and here is the residence of Marva Munson, the charming lady whom y'all met moments ago. Gentlemen...

Bow taps emphasize:

DORR

...You... are... here. Now. This brings us to this square...

The bow indicates it, and then withdraws.

begins
Dorr uses the bow as a swagger stick to punctuate as he to pace.

DORR

...Gentlemen, I believe you are all aware that the Solons of the State of Mississippi, to wit, its legislature, have decreed that no gaming establishment shall be erected within its borders upon dry land. They may, however, legally float upon any watercourse defining a state boundary. But while the gambling activity itself is restricted to riverboats, no such restriction applies to the functions ancillary to this cash besotted bidnis. The casino's offices, locker rooms, facilities to cook and clean, and most importantly its counting houses-- the reinforced, secret, and super secure repositories of the lucre -- may all be situated... wherever. Gawain -- where is wherever?

GAWAIN

Say wha?

Dorr's smug smile fades. Testily:

DORR

Where is the money?

GAWAIN

Oh. End of every shift pit boss brings the cash down to the hold of the ship in the locked cash box; once a day all the cash boxes're moved to the counting room.

DORR

And where is the counting room?

GAWAIN

Well, uh... in that square there.
Where you pointing.

DORR

And what, to flog a horse that if
not at this point dead is in mortal
danger of expirin', does the dotted
square represent?

to
Gawain hesitates, the question's obviousness suggesting
him some trick.

GAWAIN

...Offices. Underground.

his
Dorr's eyes close. A smile of feline contentment curls
lips. He murmurs:

DORR

Underground... Mmm... During the
casino's hours of operation the door
to the counting room is fiercely
guarded, and the door itself is of
redoubtable Pittsburgh steel; when
the casino is closed the entire
underground complex is locked up and
the armed guard retreats to the
casino's main entrance. There, then,
far from the guard, reposes the money,
cosseted behind a five-inch-thick
steel portal, yes, but the walls,
gentlemen, the walls of that room,
are but humble masonry, behind which
is only the soft loamy soil deposited
over the centuries by Ol' Man, the
meanderin' Mississipp', as it fanned
its way back and forth across this
great alluvial plain...

He has pried a fistfull of dirt from the cellar wall.

DORR

...This earth.

He crumbles it, letting it sift to the floor, and then,
pleased with himself, he smiles.

DORR

...Any questions?

Lump looks around, then hesitantly raises his hand.

DORR

...Yes, Lump?

LUMP

What, uh... what does "cosseted" mean?

Once again Dorr's smile fades. He does not dignify the question with answer.

DORR

The General here, whose curriculum vitae compahends massive tunneling experience thoo the soil of his native French-Indochina, will direct our little ol' tunnelin' operation.

The General acknowledges with a curt nod.

DORR

...Clark Pancake, while a master of none, is a jack of all those trades corollary to our aim. He will be doin' such fabricatin' and demolition work as our little caper shall require.

Clark acknowledges verbally:

PANCAKE

Happy to be on board.

DORR

Gawain is the proverbial "inside man". He has managed to secure a berth on the custodial staff of the Lady Luck, thereby placin' himself in a position to perform certain chores whose precise nature needn't detain us here, but whose performance shall guide this expedition to its happy conclusion.

GAWAIN

Ya damn skippy.

DORR

And this brings us to Lump. To look

at Lump you might wonder, what function could he possibly fill, what specialized expertise could he possibly offer, to our merry little ol' band a miscreants. Well gentlemen, in a project of such magnitude and such risks, it is traditional -- nay, it is imperative -- to enlist the services of a hooligan, a goon, an ape, a physical brute, who will be our security, our fist, our batterin' ram. Lump is our blunt instrument, and on all our behalfs I wish him a warm Mississippi welcome.

LUMP

Thanks, Professor.

DORR

Well gentlemen, here you are, men of different backgrounds and differing talents, men with, in fact only two things in common: one, you all saw fit to answer my little advertisement in the Memphis Scimitar, and, two, you are all going to be, in consequence, very very incredibly rich. Let us revel in our adventure, gentlemen. Let us make beautiful music together. And above all, gentlemen, let us keep it to ourselves. What we say in this root cellar, let it stay in this root cellar.

LUMP

There's no "I" in "team".

All stare at him.

DORR

...Lump has a very excellent point.

The music swells, supported now by a male chorus that has the spirited manliness of the Red Army choir. We

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. MUNSON HOUSE - BASEMENT - NIGHT

The men at work, tunneling.

at the The cat sits on the cellar floor, head cocked, gazing
hole now opened in the wall.

sweat, Lump, in a sleeveless undershirt, glistening with
wields a pickaxe at the forward point.

into a At the mouth of the hole Clark Pancake shovels dirt
heavy plastic refuse bag held open by Gawain.

time to G.H. Dorr sits on a camp chair, one hand idly waving
glasses the music, reading an old and yellowed tome with half-
perched midway down his nose.

and The General hops nimbly out of the tunnel and unzips
steps out of his all-in-one to reveal, underneath, his
neatly pressed leisure suit and ascot.

INT. MUNSON HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

looking Later, Dorr stands at the head of the cellar stairs,
and around the empty parlor. He gives a nod down the stairs
the men troop up past him, carrying sacks of earth.

devotional Over the mantelpiece, the eternal flame of the
watch candle almost animating his features, Othar seems to
the men as they cross to the front door.

EXT. MUNSON HOUSE - NIGHT

The men load the earth into the hearse.

EXT. MISSISSIPPI RIVER - NIGHT

prologue We are at the Mississippi bridge that we saw in the
to the movie, but now, in dead of night, deserted.

and The hearse is pulling up at the middle of the bridge

back
to
masonry of
bridge.

dimming its lights. The men emerge; when they open the
of the hearse to pull out the sacks, the cat bounds out
watch from a distance.

We watch the men from HIGH, ANGLED DOWN along the
a tower that stands in the middle of the suspension
An ornamental gargoyle leers in the foreground.

of its

The garbage scow is approaching. We hear the low toot
horn as it nears the bridge.

Lump is poised with the first sack hugged to his chest,
leaning over the railing.

The nose of the barge enters below us.

Lump releases the sack.

airplane.

We watch it drop dead away like a bomb from an

been

It thuds distantly onto the barge. The next sack has
passed up to Lump and is released.

adjust.

The cat watches. Its orange eyes blink. Its pupils

INT. MUNSON HOUSE - CELLAR - NIGHT

A PULL BACK shows that the cat is in fact back in the
basement.

Its POV: continued tunneling.

noise:

Back to the cat, watching, then turning its head at a

scramble
and
with a

At the head of the stairs, the cellar door is opening.
A whistle from the General and Lump and Clark Pancake
from the tunnel. They whip a curtain over its opening
all men grab up their instruments as Dorr, covering
cough, turns off the CD player.

between
it is
stairs.
Lump
and

The General, his ever-present cigarette smoldering
his lips, tongue-and-lips it up and backwards so that
inside his mouth, which he now closes.

Marva Munson is heavily and carefully descending the
As the men come into view they are looking up at her,
holding his sackbutt but still glistening with sweat
smeared with dirt.

MRS. MUNSON

That's okay, don't stop on account
of me.

his
him

Lump looks around, saucer-eyed, then blows gamely into
sackbutt. It sounds like goose farts until Dorr waves
down.

DORR

No no, madam, we were about to take
a break anyway. The glissandi on
this particular piece are technically
very demanding and I think we would
all welcome a moment of relaxation.

MRS. MUNSON

Huh. I just thought you might like
to see-what a you gotten up to, honey?
Why you sweatin' like that.

sweat-

It is directed at Lump, who looks down at his own
stained undershirt.

LUMP

I, uh...

GAWAIN

That man plays one bitch barrelful a
sackbutt. Ain't no one can blow the
tenor sackbutt like Lump, hoowee!
goes at that thing like it was a pu--
uh, like it was a woman! Goddamn! He--

She cuffs him on the head.

MRS. MUNSON

You mind! I don't want that kind of talk in my home, even in the root cellar. This is a Christian house, boy, none of that hippity-hop language.

DORR

Sadly, Gawain is given to--

WHAP! She slaps Gawain again.

MRS. MUNSON

Sometimes it's the only way!

He untenses after what seemed like the final blow, but

--

WHAP! -- she slaps him again.

MRS. MUNSON

...I'm tryin' to help you, son!

WHAP!

MRS. MUNSON

...Better yaself!

DORR

As well you should, ma'am. But Gawain at times is so far transported by his love of the music of the early Renaissance as to--

MRS. MUNSON

Don't make no never-mind he's transported!

the Dorr has her by the elbow and is ushering her back up stairs.

DORR

I understand your--

She pulls her elbow away and sniffs.

MRS. MUNSON

You been smokin'?

DORR

Certainly not, madam. I understand

your indignation. And I was offering explanation, not excuse. I myself am offended by those who cannot find the proper words to express themselves and have recourse to--

Gawain calls up the stairs:

GAWAIN

Don't you be explainin' me, dawg! You can't look into my mind, cape man!

DORR

Yes, yes...

of Dorr's tone is soothing as he shuts the door at the top the stairs.

DORR

...A fiery lad! But then Youth is fiery! A fact often remarked upon by the poets of the Romantic era.

MRS. MUNSON

My youth I was in church, I wasn't walkin' around fiery. Youth ain't no excuse for nothin'! Well, anyway... only came down to show you the fife.

Dorr She hands him a thick, roughly whittled piece of cane. holds it, looks at it dumbly. He is, for the first time that we have seen anyway, non-plussed.

MRS. MUNSON

...Othar's fife. He burned his own.

their Dorr tries to summon conversation as the two sit with backs to the fireplace:

DORR

...Did he?

MRS. MUNSON

Mm-hm. I thought maybe bein' a musical man you'd be interested.

DORR

Oh, I am indeed--

MRS. MUNSON

Cut it himself and burned the holes.
Israelites called it a kalil.

DORR

Ah.

MRS. MUNSON

Kalil, fife, same thing. You can
read about it in the Bible. Ain't
nothin' new under the sun.

DORR

Indeed not.

MRS. MUNSON

Gone these twenty years. He was some
kind of man.

in From Othar's POV, slightly high, we see them both twist
their chairs to look up at the portrait.

us REVERSE of the portrait, LOW ANGLE. Othar looks down at
with what appears to be bemusement.

motionless Marva Munson and Dorr gaze up at the portrait for a
beat. At length, Marva Munson sighs:

MRS. MUNSON

...Blowed the kalil.

Dorr's eyes remain on the picture as he inquires:

DORR

...I don't suppose Othar ever turned
his hand -- or, uh, heh-heh-heh,
turned his lip -- to the shofar?

Prompted by her silence, he adds:

DORR

...The ceremonial ram's horn, sounded
by the priests of the Hebrews?

MRS. MUNSON

I don't know nothin' 'bout that.
Othar didn't study no shofar, to the

extent a my knowledge. The kalil was good enough for my Othar...

She gazes at the portrait.

MRS. MUNSON

...Some kind of man.

INT. CASINO - DAY

TRACKING BEHIND A SASHAYING ASS

following a woman in a red dress.

GAWAIN (O.S.)

Hey baby, don't be cruel. Jus' sneak one little peek...

The woman looks back over her shoulder, smiling, as she continues to walk.

GAWAIN

...Don't let this uniform fool ya--

REVERSE PULLING TRACK

leads Gawain MacSam, pushing his wheeled trash bin.

GAWAIN

You don't need to be gamblin', honey, you lookin' at a sure thing. They call me Mr. 21, baby, 'cause that's how I measure up. I am the original black Jack, honey, accept no substitutions. You can pull my lever all day long, sweet mama, I ain't never gonna come up lemons. That's right, sugar, you can blow on my dice any ol' time.

INT. CASINO - GUDGE'S OFFICE - DAY

nails
Gudge has his feet up on the desk and is filing his
with an emery board.

GAWAIN

But Mr. Gudge, she had an ass that could pull a bus. This lady was fine, fine, dandy, divine.

GUDGE

I don't care how big her ass was,
MacSam. You're fired.

GAWAIN

Say what?

GUDGE

There is no fraternizing with
customers on the Lady Luck. Clean
out your locker.

GAWAIN

But Gudge--

GUDGE

Get out of here. You're fired.

GAWAIN

You can't fire me. I sue your ass!

GUDGE

Sue me? For what?

GAWAIN

Sue you for fuckin' punitive damages,
man!

GUDGE

Punitive damages.

GAWAIN

Ya damn skippy. I know you firin' my
ass 'cause I'm black!

GUDGE

Everyone on the custodial staff is
black, MacSam. Your replacement's
gonna be black. His replacement will
no doubt be black.

GAWAIN

Fuckin' judge is gonna be black,
motherfucker, that's who gonna be
black! You gonna stand tall before
the man!

EXT. WAFFLE HOUSE - DAY

VERY HIGH ANGLE

We are looking down past the distinctive pylon-mounted

yellow

letters: WAFFLE.

INT. WAFFLE HOUSE - DAY

cups of
informality
string

The band of miscreants is seated around a table with coffee. Dorr's wardrobe makes no concession to the of the setting; he still wears his cape and a black tie. His manner is more mournful even than usual:

DORR

Oh my. Oh my my my my my. This is a severe setback. I am distraught. I am more than distraught, I am devastated. Oh my, this is quite the monkey-wrench heaved into the meticulously engineered construct of our little escapade.

LUMP

Yeah, it fucks things up.

DORR

I am beside myself. I am at a positive loss for words.

GAWAIN

You still talkin' okay though.

WAITRESS

Have you all decided?

upon

Dorr's intensely mournful agitation is brought to bear her:

DORR

Oh madam, we must have waffles. We must all have waffles forthwith!

They hand in their menus.

DORR

...Oh we must think. We must all have waffles and think, each and every one of us to the very best of his ability! Perhaps if you apologized to the man and gave him flowers, or perhaps a fruit basket, with a card depicting a misty seascape and

inscribed with a sentiment.

GAWAIN

Shit, man, it ain't about apologizin'!
He fired me 'cause I'm black!

PANCAKE

He can't do that. You could sue him.
Open and shut case.

GAWAIN

Fuckin' A.

PANCAKE

This is not 1952.

GAWAIN

Man's a fuckin' bigot.

DORR

Well then, perhaps, surely, a
chocolate assortment has been known
to warm the heart of even the most
hardened misanthrope, especially if
it's a premium chocolate, imported,
say, from Switzerland, or the
Netherlands, or some other of the so-
called "Low" countries be they Dutch
or Flemish or Walloon--

GAWAIN

Walloon my ass, the man ain't gonna
roll over for a fuckin' candy bar!

PANCAKE

I'm afraid there's a setback on the
tunneling front too. We've run into
a pretty large rock, and--

GENERAL

-- Rock!

at a
cigarette

All turn to look at the General. He continues to stare
spot in space. He slowly releases some inhaled
smoke, murmuring:

GENERAL

...Very bad.

DORR

Oh my my, it seems that the poet was
right: Troubles never singly come.

PANCAKE

Oh, we can get through the rock, no
worries there. Simplest thing in the
world. Why we blow right through it;
I've got a pyro license, we bore a
hole in the rock, pack in a little
plastique; igneous blows pretty good,
and we--

LUMP

Is he gonna want a piece of the
action?

All turn to look at Lump.

PANCAKE

...Who?

surround

Lump hesitates, looking at the inquiring faces that
him.

LUMP

...Igneous?

A female Voice:

MOUNTAIN GIRL (O.S.)

Hello Clark. Am I ordering the prima
cord?

The men look up at her.

PANCAKE

Yes, Mountain, we were just talking
about that, and some plastique.

All the men are staring at her, agog.

GAWAIN

...The fuck is this?

PANCAKE

This is Mountain Girl. Mountain is
my right hand. She helps me with
ordnance. Helps me with damn near
everything.

The men stare.

GAWAIN

...You brought your bitch to the waffle house?!

There is tension in the air. Dorr clears his throat.

DORR

I confess myself to be puzzled as well. I thought we all understood that, so far as our little enterprise is concerned, mum, as the saying would have it, is the word--

PANCAKE

Of course. I understand that. But this is Mountain...

He chuckles.

PANCAKE

...I don't keep secrets from Mountain. That's not how you maintain a loving, caring relationship.

GAWAIN

...You brought your bitch to the waffle house?

He looks around.

GAWAIN

...Man brings his bitch to the waffle house!

PANCAKE

Look, you, I'll thank you to stop referring to Mountain that way. She's the other half of my life.

GAWAIN

Everybody lookin' at me like I'm a fuck-up, losin' that sorry-ass job, and this motherfucker bring his bitch to the waffle house!

clattering Pancake lunges across the table, sending dishes to the floor as he grabs Gawain by the shirt.

PANCAKE

You son of a bitch punk! Shut your

goddamn mouth!

at He shakes him vigorously and rears back to take a swing
him.

Gawain draws a gun.

GAWAIN

Come and get me motherfuck! Come on,
baby, let's get it on!

Mountain starts screaming.

People look, aghast.

DORR

Gentlemen, please!

The other men pry Pancake and Gawain apart.

DORR

...Gentlemen, this sort of behavior
does you no credit in the eyes of
your colleagues, or in those of the
other patrons of this waffle house!

his Pancake grumbles as he composes himself and straighten
clothes.

PANCAKE

...Nobody talks to Mountain Girl
that way. She had an abusive family!

GAWAIN

Fuck you, man.

PANCAKE

Little punk. I got syrup on my safari
jacket.

He embraces Mountain, who continues to sob quietly.

DORR

Gentlemen, I propose that we consider
the matter of this woman, Mountain
Water, to be--

PANCAKE

Mountain Girl.

DORR

I am so very sorry. I propose that we consider this matter to be closed, and we shall chose to trust her, since we now have no choice, and since she shall share only in Mr. Pancake's portion of the booty.

Over the shoulder of the quietly weeping Mountain Girl:

PANCAKE

Of course. Wouldn't have it any other way.

GAWAIN

Damn right you won't.

PANCAKE

Up yours, punk.

DORR

Gentlemen! And the manner of disposing of our igneous impediment is also settled. That leaves only the question of Gawain retrieving his job.

LUMP

Couldn't you just bribe the guy?

All turn to look at Lump.

INT. MUNSON LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

mantelpiece.
ancient
midway

Othar looks serenely down from his spot over the Marva Munson knits; G.H. Dorr sits nodding over an volume of half-forgotten lore, reading glasses perched down his nose. Curtains waft lazily in the summer night breeze.

MRS. MUNSON

...You just a readin' fool, ain't you Mr. Dorr.

DORR

Yes yes, I must confess, madam, that often I feel more at home in these ancient volumes than I do in the hustle-bustle of our modern world. To me, paradoxically, the literature

of the so-called "dead tongues" has more currency than this mornin's newspaper.

MRS. MUNSON

Mm-mm.

DORR

In these books...

He removes his glasses and lazily twirls them.

DORR

...In these volumes, there is the accum'lated wisdom a mankind which succours me when the day is hard or the night lonely and long.

MRS. MUNSON

Wisdom of mankind, what about the wisdom of the Lord?

DORR

Oh yes, the Good Book, mm. I have found reward in its pages. But for me there are other good books as well; the heavy volumes of Antiquity, freighted with the insights of Man's glorious age. And then of course I love, love, love the works of Mr. Ed G'Allan Poe.

MRS. MUNSON

I know who he is. Kinda creepy.

DORR

Oh no, madam, noooo. Not of this world, true; he lived in a dream, an ancient dream...

Dorr himself is lost in a dream:

DORR

"Helen, they beauty is to me Like those Nicean barks a yore That gently, o'er a perfumed sea, The weary, wayworn wanderer bore To his own native shore... "

MRS. MUNSON

Who was Helen? She wasn't a loose woman, was she? Some kinda whore a

Babylon?

Dorr is still lost:

DORR

One doesn't know who Helen was, though I picture her as bein' very, very extremely... pale.

He comes to himself, focuses on Mrs. Munson.

DORR

...Miz Munson, I was tryin' to think of some way of expressin' my gratitude to you for takin' in...

He chuckles.

DORR

...this weary, wayworn wanderer...

it

The Professor takes a small ticket envelope from where had served as bookmark, and hands it across.

DORR

...It's just a modest little ol' present, why it's practically nothing at all.

Beaming, she takes two tickets out of the envelope and inspects them.

MRS. MUNSON

Oh Mr. Dorr, why you are such a gallant man...

DORR

Oh no madam, I blush. I melt. No, I just happened to hear of this gospel concert tomorrow night, The Mighty Mighty Clouds of Joy, and I thought you and a friend from church, perhaps...

MRS. MUNSON

Othar loved that music... Yes, I got a widow-lady friend...

DORR

The concert is up in Memphis, but I have arranged for a car service to

transport you thither and, needless to say, back home at the concert's termination. My friends and I will be rehearsing here tomorrow evening so you needn't worry about the security of your charming little old house...

There is a knock at the door.

MRS. MUNSON

Huh? Excuse me.

I/E. MUNSON HOUSE - FOYER - NIGHT

squad

Mrs. Munson swings the door open to Sheriff Wyner. His car is parked at the curb.

MRS. MUNSON

Sheriff Wyner, how you doin'...

INT. MUNSON HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

The Professor's eyes widen with concern as he hears the voices, off:

SHERIFF (O.S.)

Evenin', Miz Munson, I just came by...

I/E. MUNSON HOUSE - FOYER - NIGHT

away,

The sheriff is tipping his hat and already backing trying to make his visit brief:

SHERIFF

...to let you know I had a word with WeeMack. He says he gonna comply with your request, keep the music down and neighborly.

MRS. MUNSON

Mm-hm.

He calls from the bottom of the stoop:

SHERIFF

So you have a pleasant evening now, and just let us know--

MRS. MUNSON

Hang on there, Sheriff, somebody I want you to meet.

SHERIFF

Ma'am, I'm a little pressed for time--

MRS. MUNSON

Why, you chasin' a gang of bank robbers? Get on in here say hello.

INT. MUNSON HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

The Voices approach:

MRS. MUNSON

...We was just havin' tea, talkin' about Othar--

The two enter and Mrs. Munson stops short, looking.

The living room is empty. Even the Professor's teacup gone.

is

MRS. MUNSON

...Hm... Bussed his own dishes. You can always tell a gentleman.

The sheriff, hat in hand, gazes about.

SHERIFF

Someone was here, ma'am?

MRS. MUNSON

Mm-hm, with me'n Othar.

Once again, he tries to excuse himself:

SHERIFF

Well, maybe I'll catch him next time...

MRS. MUNSON

Come on up to his room.

INT. MUNSON HOUSE - DORR'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

The door opens and the two look in.

The neatly made bed next to the small, barren dresser.

MRS. MUNSON

Mm, he's neat.

SHERIFF

Very neat.

MRS. MUNSON

Probably went down to the cellar to play with his friends.

She turns.

SHERIFF

Ma'am, I really have to...

POV FROM UNDER THE BED

Mrs. Top-teased by a dust ruffle in the foreground, we see Munson's heavy orthopedic shoes turning to pass Sheriff Wyner's shiny black boots.

REVERSE

saucer shows Dorr, cheek pressed to the floor, his teacup and under the bed with him.

SHERIFF

...be gettin' back...

BACK TO NORMAL PERSPECTIVE

something: Mrs. Munson is about to go out the door but notices

the A corner of the Professor's cape, protruding from under end of the bed.

MRS. MUNSON

What the...

BACK TO DORR

fearfully watching.

HIS POV

loud Mr. The heavy orthopedic shoes approach, and then, with

hit Mogul sounds of effort, Mrs. Munson's hands and knees
the floor.

against Her head drops in to view to peer in, her own cheek
the floorboards.

MRS. MUNSON

...What the... Why, Professor!

Munson's We see the Sheriff watching and his HIGH POV of Mrs.
enormous ass.

MRS. MUNSON

...What you doin' havin' tea down
there?!

presence. Dorr makes silent hand waves to disavow his own

Mrs. Munson roars with laughter.

With difficulty she pushes herself back upright, still
laughing.

MRS. MUNSON

...Land of Goshen! Get out from under
there!

SHERIFF

Miz Munson, my pager just went off...

MRS. MUNSON

Why of all the...

INT. MUNSON HOUSE - STAIRCASE/FOYER - NIGHT

The Sheriff is already backing down the stairs:

SHERIFF

'Fraid I gotta respond...

He opens the front door and calls up:

SHERIFF

...I'll try to meet your friend some
other time.

INT. MUNSON HOUSE - DORR'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Dorr shimmies out from under the bed.

DORR

Well that was very... refreshing...
As you know...

He gets to his feet, slaps dust from the front of his
pants.

DORR

...we academics are inordinately
fond of wedgin' ourselves into
confined spaces. At Yale the students
will see how many of their number
they can enclose in a telephone booth;
Harvard, a broom closet.

MRS. MUNSON

Why I never!

DORR

There was the goldfish-swallowin'
craze, of course, a different but
related phenomenon... Ahem... I hope
I didn't spill any tea...

INT. CASINO - GUDGE'S OFFICE - DAY

CLOSE ON A BOX OF CHOCOLATES

The box is being pulled open.

GUDGE (O.S.)

What the hell is this?

WIDER

shows Gawain in Mr. Gudge's office as Gudge, behind the
desk,
looks at the gift-wrapped box.

GAWAIN

It's just my way of sayin', well,
goddamnit, I don't know what it's
like walkin' in your shoes, bein'
all tightass and all, and you don't
know what it's like to walk in my
shoes, but, well...

Gudge is opening a card that was inside the box. Its
floral
front says in gold script, "I'm Sorry... If I hurt your

feelings... "

GAWAIN

...You know, there's the custodian,
and then there's the man inside the
custodian, y'understand what I'm
sayin'...

Gudge opens the card. Inside is a hundred-dollar bill.

GAWAIN

...and that man has needs, dig, and
I guess those needs, Mr. Gudge, which
they usually involve women with big
asses, well those motherfuckin' needs
sometimes well up over the custodian
like the motherfuckin' Johnstown
Flood. But my point is it ain't gonna
happen again. Not if it's humanly
possible...

back. Gudge reads the card, flips it over to look at its

GUDGE

Hmm...

GAWAIN

But Jesus, if you'd seen the ass on
that girl, Mr. Gudge, you'd a wanted
her sitting on your face too.

GUDGE

Well, we're all human.

GAWAIN

Ya damn skippy.

GUDGE

This apology buys you a one-week
probationary period. Stay away from
the customers, MacSam.

INT. TUNNEL - NIGHT

hole Pancake is on his stomach, wearing goggles, boring a
into a rock face with a power drill.

INT. MUNSON HOUSE - CELLAR - NIGHT

covered

We hear the whine of the drill faintly here, all but
by the sound of the chamber music on the boom box.

his

The other men sit around. Dorr gives a casual glance at
watch as the whine subsides.

Pancake emerges from the tunnel covered with grime.

PANCAKE

The drill bit's getting awfully hot.
Gawain, maybe you could fill a hudson
sprayer and spritz it down while I
drill.

GAWAIN

Fuck you, man, I ain't your house
nigger. I'm the inside man!

PANCAKE

Look, are you gonna have a bug up
your ass for the rest of the time we
work together?

LUMP

I'll get the sprayer.

PANCAKE

No no, me and this gentleman here
have to get square. Let me tell you
something, MacSam. You wanna know
something?

GAWAIN

I don't wanna know shit from you.

up on

Pancake leans against the wall and pushes his goggles
his forehead, leaving raccoon eyes.

PANCAKE

I'm gonna tell you how I came down
to Mississippi. Wasn't born here,
you know. I'm from Scranton,
Pennsylvania...

Abruptly, he stares off into space.

PANCAKE

...Nnnff!

GAWAIN

Huh?

Pancake's eyes regain their focus:

PANCAKE

...Scranton, Pennsylvania. Came down here in 1964. Greyhound Bus. With the Freedom Riders. You know who the Freedom Riders were, MacSam?

GAWAIN

I don't give a shit who they were. Just tell me when they gonna leave.

PANCAKE

The Freedom Riders, my fine young man, were a group of concerned liberals from up North -- whites, Negros, and yes, Jewish people -- all working together, just like we are here. Concerned citizens who came down here so that local black people could have their civil liberties. So that people like you could have the vote.

chamber All look at Pancake. Quiet, except for the delicate music.

Gawain's tone softens:

GAWAIN

...You know what, man?

PANCAKE

What, brother?

GAWAIN

I don't vote. So fuck you.

Pancake darkens:

PANCAKE

Why you fucking--

GAWAIN

And the bus you rode in on!

PANCAKE

That's it!

He peels off his coat.

PANCAKE

...Let's step outside, MacSam!

General

There is a knock on the cellar door. The men freeze momentarily, then scramble for their instruments. The

flips his cigarette backwards into his mouth.

Dorr turns off the boom box, then calls:

DORR

Yes, madam?

holding

The door opens and Mrs. Munson comes down the stairs,

a large plate covered by a checked napkin.

MRS. MUNSON

My friend Mrs. Funthes is here so I'm about to go on out. I just wanted to leave y'all with some cinnamon cookies...

person

She takes the napkin off and carries the plate from

murmured

to person; each obediently takes a cookie with a

"Thank you, ma'am."

MRS. MUNSON

...Y'all sound pretty good. It'd be nice if you'd come by the church some day, give us a recital.

stairs.

Dorr takes her by the arm and escorts her back to the

DORR

Oh madam, you are too kind. Our music, however, is -- how shall I put it? -- rather Roman in its outlook; many of our pieces were commissioned by the Holy See.

MRS. MUNSON

Oh, I see all right, but we don't make a big whoop-dee-do about denominations; everybody welcome at our church. We've had Methodists

come in. Episcopal. Even had a Jew
come in once with a guitar back in
the sixties.

DORR

Indeed. Excuse me, one moment, ma'am,
and I shall see you off...

Professor
address

They have reached the top of the stairs and the
ushers her out but stays behind himself. He turns to
the rest of the men below:

DORR

...If you gentlemen can labor
harmoniously in the course of my
absence, then perhaps upon my return
we shall be prepared to explode that
vexin' ol' piece a igneous.

GAWAIN

He's the motherfuckin' piece of
igneous.

INT. MUNSON HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

awaits
Sunday

The Professor emerges from the cellar. Mrs. Munson
with her friend who is likewise togged out in fancy
dress and carrying a shiny black purse.

MRS. MUNSON

Professor, this is Rosalie Funthes,
Rosalie, Professor G.H. Dorr, Ph.D.

ROSALIE

Oh my, that's an awful lot of letters.

DORR

Well of course in my youth I was
simply known as Goldthwait...

INT. MUNSON HOUSE - CELLAR - NIGHT

some

Pancake is taking the boom box off the table to clear
space.

PANCAKE

All right, safety meeting, let's

listen up. General, could you hand me the prima cord and the compound there. Before we set the charge we'll run through our procedure.

Various paraphernalia are laid out on the table.

carefully

The cat sits in a corner of the cellar, watching and, it seems, listening attentively.

PANCAKE

...I have earplugs for whoever wants them. Just wedge them in your ears. Now here we have -- not yet, Lump.

Lump stops putting in his earplugs.

PANCAKE

...Now. Prima cord. Gelatinite. C4. Time comes, we pack the hole in the rock with the C4 and insert two leads.
A...

He holds up one lead.

PANCAKE

...and B.

He holds up the other lead.

PANCAKE

...Charge comes from a battery that is inside this plunger. Ordinary auto battery, you can pick it up at Sears, easiest thing in the world...

EXT. MUNSON HOUSE - NIGHT

escorting

A black town car idles at the curb. Dorr is just the two ladies out the front door and down the stoop.

DORR

I remember my father telling me -- and it is one of the few memories I retain of the man, from one of his visits home, and how I do cherish it -- he said, "Goldthwait, you are not formed as other little boys."

ROSALIE

Mm-mm.

MRS. MUNSON

He a man of learnin'?

DORR

G.H. number two was self-educated; he had no career, as such, though the state recognized the breadth of his readin' by making him librarian at the state nervous hospital in Meridian, where he was a distinguished inmate.

INT. MUNSON HOUSE - CELLAR - NIGHT

Pancake sets down the two electrical leads and picks up
a
hammer.

PANCAKE

This is the same procedure we will be using when we collapse the tunnel after entering the casino vault and returning to the root cellar.

He looks pointedly at Gawain.

PANCAKE

...This is for your own protection, so pay close attention. Once these materials are combined only the professionals may handle them. That means me, or the General. Separately they are harmless-completely inert. Why, you could light this stuff on fire, hit it with a hammer--

He swings the hammer down onto the plastique--

EXT. MUNSON HOUSE - NIGHT

--and there is the dull thud of an explosion and the
house's
windows rattle in their frames.

The Professor, at the open door of the car into which
the
two ladies have just sat, looks up at the house, as do
the
ladies.

MRS. MUNSON

...What in the name of heaven was that?

Dorr stares at the house, appalled.

DORR

I'm... quite sure... that there is... no cause for alarm...

He struggles for self-possession.

DORR

...Why, I'm not even absolutely certain that I heard anything at all.

MRS. MUNSON

Didn't hear anything?!

DORR

Well, something, perhaps, but...

Marva Munson starts to get out of the car.

DORR

...nothing that need discompose us, was the sense I was trying to convey...

He urges her back into her seat.

DORR

...Miz Munson, I will not have you missing your musical recital. Why, you go ahead now. Miz Funthes, you as well, I beg of you...

He is backing up the walk.

DORR

...I shall call the gas company, or the water company, or whatever subterranean utility is implicated in this little... occurrence... I shall see to the matter... as only a highly educated classicist could.

car
not
At the door now, he gives the two women peering out the window a smiling but vigorous wave away, which they do

heed, and then he enters.

INT. MUNSON HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

The room is filled with smoke.

Othar, slightly askew over the mantel, looks a little huffy.

We hear clomping and screaming on the cellar stairs.

Lump bursts out, shrieking:

LUMP

Blood, Professor! Oh my God! Blood!

The General comes bounding up the stairs like a panther, a cigarette burning in his lips. He lands catlike in the living room, glides to the blubbering Lump, grabs one shoulder firmly with one hand, and with the other slaps him sharply, once forehand, once backhand.

Lump stares at him, shocked, his blubbering cut short.

More noise is coming from the stairs:

PANCAKE

...why, it's nothing to make a fuss about. Perfectly all right... happens all the time...

GAWAIN

...You gotta go find it, dipshit!

Pancake emerges from the stairwell, his hair singed, his face and the front of his jumpsuit darkened by the blast. He is clutching one hand with the other.

PANCAKE

...No, no. Really, I'm perfectly all right.

Gawain has ascended just behind to hector him over his shoulder:

GAWAIN

Perfectly all right? You just blew
your fucking finger off!

PANCAKE

Sure, but--

GAWAIN

Well get back down there and find
it, man! I ain't pickin' up your
goddamn finger!

DORR

I gather there was a premature
detonation--

GAWAIN

They can sew that shit back on, jack!
Like that guy his wife cut his dick
off! Just sewed that motherfucker
back on!

PANCAKE

Of course. Simplest thing in the
world. Microsurgery--

GAWAIN

Saw that motherfucker in a porno!
Thing still works!

Pancake is pale from loss of blood and his
pontifications
lack full conviction:

PANCAKE

Oh yes, they have remarkable abilities
in the, uh...

EXT. MUNSON HOUSE - NIGHT

Quiet.

The two women sit in the idling car, looking at the
house.

From the house there is very muted bellowing.

Still looking toward the house, Mrs. Munson offers a
word of
explanation to her friend:

MRS. MUNSON

They using the house to practice

music a the rococo.

ROSALIE

Mmmm-hm.

INT. MUNSON HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

The cat, with a human finger in its mouth, sidles
cautiously to one side, warily eyeing someone.

VOICES (O.S.)

Get him!

The General, pluming cigarette in his mouth, tensed
arms extended outwards, sidles cautiously to cut him off.

DORR

I propose that we get our fallen
comrade to the hospital, and the
General shall follow when he manages
to recover the severed digit.

PANCAKE

I don't know what all the fuss is
about.

The cat jumps.

The General leaps to follow.

EXT. MUNSON HOUSE - NIGHT

The two women looking.

The front door of the house opens. Lump, the Professor,
and Gawain emerge, escorting Pancake. Just before Gawain
finishes closing the door the cat slips out.

MRS. MUNSON

PICKLES!

The door is yanked fully open and the General races out
after the cat.

MRS. MUNSON

...You catch Pickles now!

stride,
The cat races across the lawn and, with no break in
up his favorite tree.

The General follows and, also without breaking stride,
clammers up the tree after it.

hear
Tree limbs shake with activity hidden by the leaves. We
the hiss of the cat.

calls to
The men are bundling Pancake into the hearse. Dorr
the women before climbing in:

DORR

The house is perfectly in order, but
we need medical attention for Mr.
Pancake who, during the disturbance,
pinched his finger in a valve of the
sackbutt.

road.
The cat leaps out of the tree and runs away down the

MRS. MUNSON

You let the cat out!

the
pursues
padding
The General leaps out of the tree to land catlike on
street, arms tensed, casts a look both ways, and then
the animal down the road. We hear the retreating
footsteps of all six feet.

DORR

The General is even now exercising
every effort to retrieve your
mischievous little pet. Please go,
go and enjoy your concert, and we
shall see you later in the evening.
Au revoir, mes dames!

EXT. MISSISSIPPI RIVER - NIGHT

Mississippi.
A new day. The garbage scow chugs down the mighty
It toots its horn.

INT. MUNSON HOUSE - CELLAR - NIGHT

CLOSE ON SCHEMATIC MAP

towards it
is
It shows the underground complex and, stretching
in a line drawn with a blunt pencil, is the tunnel. It
now almost to the vault.

A violin bow enters to tap at the line.

DORR (O.S.)

Despite our little setback we find
ourselves on schedule to penetrate
the vault...

The bow taps at the vault outline.

DORR

...here, this afternoon, having
successfully blasted that little ol'
rock to pieces during Miz Munson's
choir practice.

The violin bow withdraws.

DORR

...Clark, perhaps you can run us
through the game plan for what remains
of our tunnelin'.

at
A bandaged hand enters frame and a finger-stump points
the end of the penciled line.

PANCAKE (O.S.)

Of course. Why, it's child's play
now, easiest thing in the world.
Only a couple of feet separate us
from the vault...

WIDER

The men are clustered around the map, spread out on the
sackbutt case in the cellar. Clark continues:

PANCAKE

...Just the usual spadework until we
hit the masonry of the vault, and
then we drill through.

DORR

And will you be able to wield the

drill with your maimed extremity?

PANCAKE

Oh, I should think so, it's only one finger. Inhibits me in doing finer work, of course. I'll always have to live with that... Ahem. Maybe, and I'm just thinking out loud here, maybe since, as you say, it will present problems later...

DORR

Yes, Clark?

PANCAKE

Well, maybe -- and this is something I've talked over with Mountain Girl, and she agrees with me, so it's not just one person's opinion -- maybe I should get a little extra compensation for the accident.

A long, stony silence.

PANCAKE

...Somewhat larger share. Why, if this were any other line of work I'd be getting workmen's comp, wouldn't I? Might even have a pretty good lawsuit.

GAWAIN

You gonna sue yaself for blowin' off your finger?

PANCAKE

Well that is simply asinine--

DORR

Yes but you see, Clark, this is not what you just called "some other line of work."

PANCAKE

But if it were--

DORR

This is a criminal enterprise, not to put too fine a point on it, entailin' all manner a risks not involved in honest labor. Governmental regulations an' civic safeguards

cannot be assumed to apply to antisocial pursuits.

LUMP

Yeah, but he lost his finger.

GAWAIN

We don't give a shit! Man can blow his own dick off, don't make no nevermind to us! We don't gotta pay the man for goin' around blowin' off body parts! Getcha head outcha ass, man!

PANCAKE

Look, you--

DORR

I think that in this instance Gawain has a very excellent point. I--

GENERAL

No extra share!

All stop and stare at the General.

Clark grumbles:

PANCAKE

Well, okay, majority rules, like I say, it was just a trial balloon. Hand's not so bad really, I even get some phantom feeling.

GAWAIN

You pull on your prick you get phantom feeling. Greedy motherfuck.

DORR

Now that that matter is settled, let us synchronize our watches before Gawain reports to work. In... twenty seconds... it will be twelve-sixteen exactly... fifteen...

PANCAKE

It will be twelve-fifteen?

DORR

No, in fifteen seconds -- now eleven seconds -- it will be twelve-sixteen... eight...

LUMP

Professor?

DORR

Six... five -- yes, Lump?

LUMP

I don't have a watch.

EXT. CASINO - DAY

Lady

It is the weathered doorway to the main entrance of the Luck. A hand enters to rap.

ELRON (O.S.)

Yeah?

GAWAIN

Me, dickwad.

enters.

A low, chesty chuckle. The door swings open and Gawain

INT. CASINO - DAY

RUMBLING WHEELS ON NUBBY FLOOR

floor.

A garbage bin is being wheeled across the empty casino

WIDER

the

Gawain is wheeling it. He is approaching the tunnel to corporate annex.

BACK TO THE WHEELS

As they roll down the tunnel.

INT. CHURCH - DAY

in

Loud singing at the cut. We are looking at Mrs. Munson the middle of the choir, holding forth in song.

INT. CASINO - SERVICE HALL - DAY

door,

Gawain leans back against the wall next to the vault

vault,
and
rolling
In El

arms folded across his chest. Faintly, from inside the
we hear the whine of a power tool. Gawain leans over
punches the button on boom box that hangs from the
garbage bin. The hallway pulses with "I Left My Wallet
Segundo."

INT. CHURCH - DAY

More singing, Mrs. Munson and the rest of the choir now
clapping as they sing.

INT. CASINO - VAULT - DAY

a

The power-tool whine is louder here. We are looking at
patch of wall.

way, a
the

After a beat, and with a loud rev as resistance gives
drill bit emerges from the wall, spitting out bits of
masonry.

The drill withdraws.

After a beat, hammer blows.

The chunk of masonry begins to buckle.

INT. CASINO - SERVICE HALL - DAY

The General opens the door, still somehow immaculately
groomed. Gawain enters.

INT. CHURCH - DAY

organist

The gospel number rising to climax, supported by the
and the rest of the congregation.

INT. CASINO - VAULT - DAY

started
garbage
in

Clark and Lump, covered in dirt and plaster dust, have
stuffing bundled bills and small sacks into large
bags. An irregular hole, about three feet across, gapes

the far wall.

Gawain punches off the boombox, looking at all the money.

GAWAIN

Well ain't that somethin'.

Clark suddenly freezes in the act of collecting money. He straightens slowly.

PANCAKE

Hnnnn. Arrunggggh! Rnffff.

He stands stock still, wincing, gazing off into space.

PANCAKE

...Mmmmnggh!

He whispers hoarsely, urgently:

PANCAKE

...IBS!

The other men look at him.

GAWAIN

...Say what?

PANCAKE

IBS! Irritable Bowel Syndrome! Is there a men's room down here?!

GAWAIN

Oh man, you shouldn't be using the men's room--

PANCAKE

Or a lady's room! IBS! Quickly!

GAWAIN

You shoulda shit back in the house, man! We don't want Elron finding you in the goddamn crapper!

Clark's voice is still hoarse. He does small knee bends of urgency:

PANCAKE

No choice! Quickly! It's a medical

condition!

GAWAIN

You are disgusting, man. All right,
follow me.

INT. CASINO - DAY

We are CLOSE ON Gawain peering anxiously to one side.

He turns and peers the other way.

from
manner

We hear a toilet flush and, after a beat, Clark emerges
the men's room door next to which Gawain stands. His
is now completely relaxed.

PANCAKE

Feel thirty pounds lighter.

They start walking back to the vault.

PANCAKE

...Thank you for being so
understanding. Not everyone is, of
course, which is why the biggest
challenge of IBS is educating the
public. Afflicts over two million
people yet most of us have never
heard of it. And it strikes without
regard to age, gender or race.

GAWAIN

Oh fuck, man, I don't wanna know
about it.

PANCAKE

That's the kind of attitude we're
fighting.

GAWAIN

Well maybe you should sign me up,
man, 'cause you startin' to irritate
my bowel.

INT. CHURCH - DAY

Marva
her

The choir finishes a number and sits -- all except for
Munson, who unties the knot on her robe at the nape of

away. neck, slips it off and, with murmured goodbyes, slips

INT. CASINO - VAULT - DAY

As the two men enter Clark is still holding forth:

PANCAKE

...I guess I never told you, that's how Mountain Girl and I met. They had an IBS Weekend at Grossinger's, in the Catskills. Of course the tourist business up there has suffered, with the demise of the Borscht Belt. So they have different promotions, mixers, so on. This was a weekend for Irritable Bowel singles to meet and support each other and share stories.

GAWAIN

Man, I don't wanna hear a single one a them stories.

PANCAKE

Well, some of them are very--

GAWAIN

Not one fuckin' story! You one fucked-up motherfucker! You--

They stop short, looking:

floor,
at
The General and Lump are standing in the middle of the stock still, each clutching a bag of money, staring up at the same corner of the ceiling.

Lump turns to Clark and Gawain.

LUMP

Hey, lookit that.

and
Gawain and Clark join them in the middle of the vault look up at the corner of the ceiling.

A small video camera, aimed squarely at the four men.

THROUGH THE CAMERA

the
Smoke

Black-and-white video, very WIDE ANGLE HIGH SHOT, of
four motionless men below goggling up at the lens.
plumes from the General's cigarette.

BACK TO NORMAL PERSPECTIVE

PANCAKE

Huh. Looks like an Ikegami.

a
peers in

He slips on his reading glasses as he gets a leg up on
shelf just below the camera and hoists himself. He
at the lens.

THROUGH THE LENS

Clark looming into EXTREME CLOSE SHOT.

PANCAKE

...Oh yeah. Mm-hm. I'm not sure
whether it's broadcasting...

NORMAL PERSPECTIVE

PANCAKE

...Um-hm... No...

He is fingering the back of the camera.

PANCAKE

...Hard wire...

seam
down

Down below, Gawain looks at the wire snaking along the
of wall and ceiling. At the opposite corner it travels
the joint of the two walls.

chair-
an

He traces its path down and then across one wall at
rail height towards the door. The other men follow in
anxious herd as he traces one finger along it.

through
goes

Just before reaching the vault door the wire goes
the wall in a hole finished off with a grommet. Gawain
out the vault door...

INT. CASINO - SERVICE HALL - DAY

side,
other
The

...and picks up the line where it emerges on the other
travels down to the joint of wall and floor, and then
continues along the floor. Gawain follows it and the
men continue to follow him.
He traces it anxiously down the hall in a hunched lope.
other men scuttle behind into...

INT. CASINO - MONITOR ROOM - DAY

rail
Gawain
down
its
plugged
ejects.
it:

The wire winds around into the room, back up to chair-
height, along one wall, behind some cabinetry which
hurries past to find it again on the far side, and then
to a video recorder.
It is not, however, hooked up to the video recorder:
pronged end swings loose just by where it would be
in.
Inside the video recorder is a cassette, which Gawain
The men crowd to look over his shoulder as he examines

"Shevann's Schvanz".

"Charlayne
Night
Andy."

There is a pile of other videos by the monitor:
and the Chocolate Factory," "Big Dick Blaque's Big
Out," "Lemme Tell Ya 'Bout Black Chicks," "Anus &
Just next to the pile is an old bowl of Kocoa Krispies.

INT. CASINO - VAULT - DAY

bagful of
hands

The General climbs into the tunnel with a garbage
money, followed by Lump, likewise encumbered. Lump

floor
heavy.
climb

back out a satchel to Gawain, who sets it on the vault
by the hole. From the way he handles it, it is quite
Pancake, also with a bag of money, is getting ready to
in:

PANCAKE

Look, I didn't choose to have IBS--

GAWAIN

Shut the fuck up!

likewise

Lump hands Gawain a smaller, lighter satchel which he
sets on the floor.

PANCAKE

There's no cure, you know. Only
control. Lifelong condition. Not
complaining, just fact. And I did
meet Mountain.

GAWAIN

Grab your bag and get in that fucking
hole!

EXT. CHURCH - DAY

the

Mrs. Munson is leaving, with singing still audible from
service that continues inside.

INT. MUNSON HOUSE - CELLAR - DAY

mouth,
anxiously

We are looking from inside the tunnel towards its
where the Professor stoops slightly to peer in,
dry-washing his hands.

the

A REVERSE shows the hunched-over men scuttling along
tunnel towards us, holding large garbage sacks.

DORR

Welcome back, gentlemen, mission
accomplished I see. I am so very
very delighted...

tunnel. He gives a hand down to each man as he exits the

DORR

...Congratulations. Congratulations.
I have some cold duck on ice for the
occasion.

LUMP

Maybe we could have something to
drink, too.

INT. CASINO - VAULT - DAY

a
up
Gawain, left behind, is muttering to himself as he uses
trowel and other instruments from his satchel to patch
the hole at his end of the tunnel.

GAWAIN

Motherfucker can't stop talking,
can't stop shitting. Motherfucker
tell everyone about his motherfuckin'
asshole. No one gives a shit about
his asshole. Nobody interested in
another man's asshole. Or his bitch's.

EXT. MUNSON HOUSE - DAY

Mrs. Munson is letting herself in.

INT. MUNSON HOUSE - CELLAR - DAY

piles.
The men are sitting around the table, champagne glasses
raised. On the table sits the money, stacked in orderly

DORR

Gentlemen, to we few. We who have
shared each other's company, each
other's care, each other's joy, and
who now reap the fruits of our
communal effits, shoulder to shoulder,
from each accordin' to his abilities
so forth whatnot. We have had our
little diffences along the way, it's
true, but I like to think they have
only made us value one another the
more, each coming to understand and
appreciate the other's unique
qualities, potencies, and, yes,

foibles. I suggest that we shall look back upon this caper one day, one distant day, grandchildren dandled upon our knee, and perhaps a tear will form, and we shall say, Well, with wit, and grit, and no small amount of courage, we accomplished something on that day, a feat of derring-do, an enterprise not ignoble -- we, merry band, unbound by the constraints of society and the prejudices of the common ruck, we happy few. Gentlemen -- to us!

MEN

To us!

They clink.

INT. MUNSON HOUSE - KITCHEN - DAY

Upstairs Mrs. Munson runs water into a teapot, humming to herself.

INT. CASINO - VAULT - DAY

Having finished patching, Gawain starts painting. He turns on his boombox, and out comes the big bassy "I Left My Wallet in El Segundo."

INT. MUNSON HOUSE - CELLAR - DAY

The men, having drunk deep, are setting down their glasses. Pancake looks at his watch with some concern.

PANCAKE

Charge should've gone off already.

DORR

I do beg your pardon?

PANCAKE

The charge to collapse the tunnel. I set it for eight minutes.

Dorr looks at his watch.

DORR

Well that time, and more, has most certainly elapsed.

FROM INSIDE THE TUNNEL

Looking toward the mouth. The men stoop over and peek fearfully in.

They again stand upright. A silence.

Dorr clears his throat.

DORR

I need not remind you of the importance of obliterating any trace of a connection between the vault and this house. It was of the essence of this plan that it should appear that the money had simply vanished. Without a trace. Spirited away, as it were, by ghosts.

PANCAKE

Of course. I understand.

DORR

The conundrum of the undisturbed yet empty vault, the unsolvable riddle of the sealed yet violated sanctum, is of the utmost importance not only to make our caper intellectually satisfying. It is also exigent as a matter of practical fact: I remind you that if a tunnel is ever found leading to this house, this house's owner knows all of your names.

PANCAKE

She certainly does.

DORR

Therefore -- to draw the unavoidable conclusion -- someone shall have to reenter the tunnel to reset that charge.

INT. TUNNEL - DAY

reaches
smaller.

Pancake, hunched over, scurries along the tunnel. He
the remnants of a large rock, where the tunnel grows

He drops to crawl position and elbows his way forward, toolbelt clanking along.

thuddingly We are getting closer and closer to a muffled but bassy "I Left My Wallet in El Segundo."

INT. CASINO - VAULT - DAY

handheld The music loudly present at the cut. Gawain takes a blowdryer out of his satchel and flips it on, directing it at the fresh paint on the wall whose repairs are now invisible.

INT. TUNNEL - DAY

LED- Music once again muffled. Pancake has reached a little displaying timer with leads trailing off of it.

He grabs it, puts on his reading glasses, squints.

The display shows: TIME REMAINING: 00:12.

number The colons in the display rhythmically blink, but the does not advance. For some reason, stuck.

PANCAKE

Huh.

He reaches to his tool belt, pulls out his Leatherman.

INT. MUNSON HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - DAY

are Mrs. Munson is setting places at a large table. There about a dozen place settings.

INT. TUNNEL - DAY

teeth, Pancake now has a mini-mag light clenched between his aimed down at the timer. He opens the phillips head on his Leatherman but abruptly stops and stares off into space.

PANCAKE

Nnnnrung...

He is squinting with pain.

The muffled hip-hop song is beginning to recede.

INT. VAULT - DAY

vault

Gawain is wheeling his garbage cart out the door. The vault is completely empty but looks completely undisturbed.

quiet.

He closes the heavy vault door behind him, leaving

INT. TUNNEL - DAY

nothing.

Quiet here as well, now. Pancake's moan trails off to

He relaxes. The moment, whatever it was, has passed.

finger,

He looks back down at the unit, flicks it with his

and it emits a soft beep.

PANCAKE

...Huh?

He squints at the back of the unit.

its

As it beeps again, he turns the unit over to look at face.

The readout now says: 00:10.

glasses,

As he watches, peering down through the bottom of his

slips by:

it continues to advance with a beep as each second

9... 8...

PANCAKE

...What the--

the

His eyes widen and he frantically shakes the unit. It continues beeping. He briefly and sloppily tries to fit

of the

Phillips head into one of the four screws on the back

wriggle

unit but immediately gives up and starts a panicked

back up the tunnel, whimpering.

INT. CASINO - DAY

Gawain is wheeling his garbage cart past Elron.

INT. MUNSON HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - DAY

just
Mrs. Munson is placing the last piece of silverware,
so.

INT. TUNNEL - DAY

Pancake is in full panicked awkward flight as--

INT. MUNSON HOUSE - CELLAR - DAY

the
of
stacked
--BOOM! We CUT TO the cellar and Pancake is shot out
tunnel like a human cannonball, trailing a comet-tail
dirt, dust, and debris that wafts what were neatly
bills up into the air.

INT. MUNSON HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - DAY

looks a
The portrait of Othar jostles back to square. He now
little angry.

The cat arches her back, emitting a startled yowl.

trying
Mrs. Munson stands, frozen, then looks slowly around,
to assimilate what has just happened.

INT. CASINO - DAY

also
Gawain and Elron are staring at each other, frozen,
reacting to what just happened.

Finally:

GAWAIN

...You just fart?

ELRON

Heh-heh-heh.

INT. MUNSON HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - DAY

out
Mrs. Munson is looking at the cellar door. Dust drifts
from under it.

opens
She takes a slow step towards it. Another step. She
the door.

clay
There is no visibility in the cellar due to swirling
dust.

in
She takes one step down the stairs, waving at the air
front of her face.

Paper money wafts in and out of the dust.

We hear Voices:

PANCAKE (O.S.)

Perfectly all right. Not a problem.

LUMP (O.S.)

Well there sure as shit ain't no
tunnel left.

air.
The clearing dust reveals the caped Professor anxiously
dancing from foot to foot, gathering money out of the

in
As he reaches up to grab a bill that has him facing up
Mrs. Munson's direction, he freezes.

His POV reveals her through dissipating dust.

MRS. MUNSON

Professor, I'm surprised.

There is a long beat, through which all stare at her.

DORR

...Properly speaking, madam, we have
been surprised; you are taken aback.
Though I acknowledge that the sense
you intend is gaining currency through
increasing use.

there
Further dissipation of the dust reveals how much money

is, settling now to cover the floor of the cellar.

DORR

...You have returned from your
devotions betimes.

We hear the ring of the doorbell.

MRS. MUNSON

I hadda fix tea. I wanna talk to
you, Professor, don't you be leavin'.
And don't make any more noise! And
you!

She points at the General who, in the excitement, has
neglected to hide his ever-present cigarette.

MRS. MUNSON

...I told you, I don't want any
smokin' in here!

She clomps upstairs and shuts the cellar door.

INT. MUNSON HOUSE - LIVING ROOM

We PULL HER towards the front door, angry and lost in
thought.

Her look softens somewhat as she opens the door.

It is a chattering infestation of hens: all of her
friends
elaborate
from church push in wearing church dresses and
hats.

INT. MUNSON HOUSE - CELLAR - DAY

The men are still frozen looking up toward the door.
The
muted cackle of church ladies.

The men gradually unfreeze.

LUMP

She saw everything. She saw our
hole...

He turns to Dorr, near tears:

LUMP

...She saw our hole, Professor!

Dorr rubs his hands anxiously, thinking:

DORR

Yes... Yes...

LUMP

What do we do?

DORR

Well, first, my dear boy, we follow
the General's example...

for The General remains staring up at the door, frozen but
the smoke pluming from the cigarette in his mouth.

DORR

...and refrain from panic. Secondly,
we coolly, calmly, collectedly think...
think...

door, The gaze of all the men drifts back up to the cellar
and we look down at them, gazing up.

INT. MUNSON HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - DAY

Munson The chattering ladies are gathered at the table, Mrs.
pouring them tea.

The cellar door creaks noisily -- one might almost say
gothically -- ajar, and the Professor peers out with an
ingratiating smile.

DORR

Hsst... Madam...

His The chattering abates and the ladies all look at him.
toward smile broadens into ghastrliness and he crooks a finger
Mrs. Munson.

DORR

...Mrs. Munson, if I might have a
word...

MRS. MUNSON

You get back down those stairs!

DORR

I assure you I shall be--

MRS. MUNSON

Hush! Down those stairs! We havin' tea now! I be down shortly.

shut. He nods meekly and retreats, easing the door creakily

footsteps The ladies look inquisitively at Mrs. Munson as his are heard descending the stair.

MRS. MUNSON

...He's the tenant.

LADIES

Mm-hm.

INT. MUNSON HOUSE - CELLAR DAY

group. As the Professor rejoins the still staring and silent

stacks The money has been picked up and is once again in upon the table.

DORR

She shall be down shortly...

head: Explaining, he indicates upstairs with a jerk of the

DORR

...Tea. Dainties.

The men nod, murmuring.

careful The cellar door squeaks open. There is the clomp of footsteps on the stair.

smoking Using only tongue and teeth, the General flips his his cigarette inwards into his mouth and gives Mrs. Munson usual deadpan look.

apron She halts halfway down the stairs, still wearing an and holding a spatula.

MRS. MUNSON

I don't know what you boys been up to but I wasn't born yesterday and I know mischief when I see it. Now I want an explanation, but first I want you boys to get your fannies up here with y'all's period instruments. I been tellin' the ladies about your music and they wanna hear you play.

to
innocently

She turns to head back up the stairs but abruptly stops
turn and give the General a hard look which he
returns.

MRS. MUNSON

...Hmph.

his
lower

She turns again and clomps back up the stairs.
The General opens his mouth and, again without using
hands, restores his cigarette to its usual place on his
lip.
Lump is fretful:

LUMP

Professor?

DORR

Yes, Lump?

LUMP

I can't really play the buttsack.

INT. MUNSON HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - DAY

leading

The cellar door opens and the men troop out, G.H. Dorr
and the other men following rather sheepishly behind.

DORR

Madame -- or rather, mesdames -- you will have to accept our apologies for failing to perform since, as you see, we are shorthanded. Gawain is still at work and we could no more play with one part tacit than a horse could canter shy one leg.

LADIES

Mm-hmm.

MRS. MUNSON

Hmph.

DORR

Perhaps I could offer as a poor but ready substitute a brief poetic recital. Though I don't pretend to great oratorical skills, I will happily present, with your ladies' permission, verse from the unquiet mind of Mr. Ed G'Allan Poe.

dainty Lump, Pancake, and the General sit and awkwardly accept teacups.

The Professor rises, spreads his hand, and pronounces:

DORR

..."Ladies, thy beauty is to me Like those Nicean barks of yore..."

slowly man CLOSE-UPS of the various ladies, some sipping tea or munching biscuits, but all eyes glued to the declaiming in the cape.

DORR

"That gently, o'er a perfumed sea
The weary, wayworn wanderer bore To
his own native shore... "

Murmuring Voice:

VOICE

Amen.

A slurp of tea from another quarter.

Dorr bears on:

DORR

"On desperate seas long wont to roam,
Thy hyacinth hair, thy classic face,
Thy Naiad airs have brought me home
To the glory that was Greece And the
grandeur that was Rome... "

A long silence.

Then, scattered:

VOICES

Mm-mm. Glory hallelujah.

A lady holding a teacup turns to the General:

LADY

That was soooooe poem.

The General stares at her.

LADY

...You know any?

We hear the front door opening and Gawain enters, still wearing his Lady Luck custodial uniform. He looks.

seated

His POV: church ladies with teacups and his comrades among them, also holding teacups and scones.

GAWAIN

Y'all been celebratin'?.

INT. MUNSON HOUSE - FOYER - LATER (EVENING)

leaving;

The bustling and chattering ladies are just finishing Mrs. Munson is seeing them off at the door. Evening is gathering, and we hear the lonely toot of the distant scow.

garbage

cheer,

The men as well stand by the door and, affecting good wave off the departing ladies.

DORR

Goodbye, ladies. We had such a pleasant time.

darkens.

Mrs. Munson closes the door and her manner instantly

MRS. MUNSON

Now, I wanna know what's goin' on.

DORR

Yes indeed, and the thirst for knowledge is a very commendable thing. Though in this instance, I believe when you hear the explanation, you will laugh riotously, slappin' your knee and perhaps even wipin' away a giddy tear, relieved of your former concern.

MRS. MUNSON

Hmph.

DORR

You see Lump here is an enthusiastic collector of Indian arrowheads and, having found one simply lying on your cellar floor, a particularly rare artifact of the Natchez tribe, he enlisted us in an all-out effort to sift through the subsoil in search of others. Well, in doing so, we apparently hit a motherlode of natural gas -- I myself became acutely aware of the smell of "rotten eggs" -- and it was at just this unfortunate moment that the General here violated one of the cardinal rules of this house and lit himself a cigarette.

The General stiffly bows:

GENERAL

So sorry.

hands, The Professor, nodding, smiling, and dry-washing his continues to look at Mrs. Munson, though his story, apparently, has ended.

She returns his ingratiating look with a stare.

MRS. MUNSON

...What about all that money?

Dorr's smile fades.

DORR

...Ah. The money. The money is... Mr. Pancake's.

PANCAKE

That's right.

DORR

He only just re-mortgaged his house in order to pay for the procedure that will correct the wandering eye of his common-law wife, Mountain Water, who suffers from astygmia and strabismus and a general curdling of the vitreous jelly. Mr. Pancake however is an ardent foe of the federal reserve and is in fact one of those eccentrics about whom one occasionally reads, hoarding his entire life savings either under the proverbial mattress or, as in Mr. Pancake's case, in a Hefty bag that is his constant companion.

Under her stare, he elaborates:

DORR

...Steel Sack.

PANCAKE

Don't trust the banks. Never have.

She thinks, decides.

MRS. MUNSON

This don't smell right. I'm callin' Sheriff Wyner.

A chorus of gasps.

DORR

Madam -- if you please. Yes! Yes! It was a lie! A fantastic tale! You have us! Dead to rights! But please allow me to tell you the truth -- in private.

INT. MUNSON HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - EVENING

sits
He escorts her to sit beneath the portrait of Othar, across from her, and leans confidentially in.

DORR

Madam...

He agonizes. The words do not come easy.

DORR

...What I am about to reveal to you, you may find... shocking. Mrs. Munson, I must tell you that we are not... what we appear.

MRS. MUNSON

Mm-hm.

DORR

We are not in fact musicians of the late Renaissance. Nor of the early or mid period. We are, in fact... criminals! Desperate men, madam! We have tunneled into the nearby offices of the Lady Luck gambling emporium and have relieved it of its treasure!

MRS. MUNSON

Lord have mercy!

DORR

It is true that the Lady Luck is a den of iniquity, a painted harlot luring people into sin and exciting the vice of greed with her false promise of easy winnings. Oh, her gains are ill-gotten, yes, but I offer no excuses -- save one! We men have each pledged half of our share of the booty to a charitable institution -- the General, to a placement service for Southeast Asian refugees; Mr. Pancake to the Blue Ridge Parkway Conservancy; and Lump to the United Jewish Appeal. As compensation for use of your house we had planned to donate a full share to Bob Jones University, without burdening you with guilty knowledge by informing you of same. But you have wrested the information from me! Now it is all on the table. Now you have it, the whole story, the awful truth.

MRS. MUNSON

Stolen money!

DORR

Yes, yes, shamefully I admit it, yes! But find the victim, Mrs. Munson,

I challenge you! Even the casino itself, that riparian Gomorra, shall suffer no harm! It has an insurance company, a financial behemoth that will cheerfully replenish its depleted vaults! That is its function! And the insurance company itself is made up of tens and tens of thousands of policy-holders so that -- we have done the calculations, Mrs. Munson! -- so that at the end of the day, at the final reckoning, each policy-holder shall have contributed only one penny -- one single solitary cent -- to the satisfaction of this claim.

MRS. MUNSON

...Just one penny?

DORR

Think of it, Mrs. Munson! One cent from thousands upon thousands of people so that Bob Jones University can continue on its mission! Why, I have no doubt that, were the policy-holders aware of the existence of that august institution, why, each and every one of them would have volunteered some token amount to the furtherance of its aims!

MRS. MUNSON

Well that's prob'ly true...

hands: The Professor, warming, has resumed dry-washing his

DORR

Yes madam, sadly, the criminal stain is upon my soul, but the benefit shall accrue to any number of worthy causes. As long, that is, as the secret stays with us. And I, surely, shall not be the one to divulge it.

Mrs. Munson nods, musing.

MRS. MUNSON

Well... it's hard to see the harm in it... One penny...

warm
catches on

Her gaze drifts around the room, a smile beginning to
her face. The smile freezes, though, as her look
something.

Her POV: Othar, above the mantle, looks down with a
disapproving scowl.

MRS. MUNSON

...I'm sorry, Professor.

Dorr is taken aback:

DORR

Excuse me, ma'am?

MRS. MUNSON

No. It's wrong. Don't you be leadin'
me into temptation.

DORR

Madam, I must strenuously protest--

MRS. MUNSON

No, it's just plain wrong. Stealin'.
I know your intentions were good,
and I won't call the police if you
give the money back. But I gotta see
that you do it.

DORR

Madam--

MRS. MUNSON

And all a you gotta go to church
with me next Sunday.

The Professor is incredulous:

DORR

And... engage in divine worship?

MRS. MUNSON

I made up my mind. You can double-
talk all you want, but its church or
the county jail.

DORR

But--

She rises.

MRS. MUNSON

You think it over. I gotta feed the cat.

INT. MUNSON HOUSE - CELLAR - NIGHT

by an

The men all sit around the card table, lit from below oil lamp. The General is neatly packing the stacks of banknotes into the sackbutt case.

GAWAIN

Motherfuck!

DORR

Yes. Unfortunately, Mrs. Munson has rather complicated the situation--

GAWAIN

I know how to discomplicate it! Put a cap in the old lady's head! Then everything simple again!

needs

The group lapses into silence, considering. Even Gawain a moment to digest the horror that he himself has

proposed.

The Professor is solemn:

DORR

...Not easy to do. Many reasons. Practical ones: a quiet neighborhood, a sleepy town. Reasons of moral repugnance: a harmless woman, a deed conceived and executed in cold blood. No, Gawain; would that it were simple!

GAWAIN

Well -- fuck, man! What we gonna do, give the money back and go to church?!

DORR

I shudder. I quake.

He turns to the General.

DORR

...You sir, are a Buddhist. Is there not a middle way?

sackbutt

The General grunts as he closes the clasps on the case full of money:

GENERAL

Must float like a leaf on the river of life. And kill old lady.

The men murmur.

DORR

Well... I suppose you are right. It is the active nature of the crime, though, that so horrifies -- the squeezing of the trigger, the plunging of the knife. But, think a moment -- look at the other tools we have at hand.

He looks around.

DORR

...We have the cellar. We have masonry and trowel. Perhaps we could simply... immure her.

PANCAKE

Sure, easiest thing in the world. I could whip up a little mortar in one of those snow saucers, lay the bricks, anchor in some chains, Mountain has a source for the manacles...

DORR

Ahh but gentlemen, we delude ourselves. Think of the woman's piteous moans as we lay tier upon tier of brick. Think of her lamentations as we fit the last brick into place, appealing to our better selves, the higher angels of our nature, our recollections of our own sainted mothers... No, I fear that we lack the sand to commit such an act. No... no... shortest and most painless is best. Let us confront reality. Gawain's gun... the retort muffled by a pillow... into the brain... the affair of an instant. The only question is... who wields the weapon.

He looks around the table. Silence. No volunteers.

DORR

...I believe it is traditional, in such circumstances, to draw straws.

PANCAKE

Well, sure, fair enough.

and He takes a broom leaning against the wall, bends back and snaps a handful of its bristles.

PANCAKE

...I'm thinking, though, that since I lost my finger -- I mean, literally lost it because of that goddamn cat -- maybe I should be excused from this thing. Hard for me to squeeze a trigger anyway--

GAWAIN

You one whiney motherfucker! I squeeze your nutsack you keep that up!

PANCAKE

Listen, punk--

DORR

Gentlemen, no special pleading, no exceptions. It's in the nature of the situation that we would all prefer to be excused.

one Pancake grumbles as he counts out five bristles, takes and snaps it in half, displaying the short straw to the group, and then hands the four long and one short to the Professor:

PANCAKE

Well, okay... it was just a trial balloon...

straws and With a flap of his cape the professor jumbles the and encloses them in one hand.

Sweaty CLOSE-UPS. Each man stares at the straws. Some hesitant, some resolute, they draw:

impassive.

First, the General: long straw. His reaction:

Next, Lump: long straw. His reaction: relieved.

Next, Pancake. Long straw.

PANCAKE

Long straw. You all see it. All your
fuss over nothing, punk.

Two straws left. Gawain stares at them, licks his lips.

He reaches for one straw, touches it, hesitates.

GAWAIN

...Motherfucker...

He touches the other straw, hesitates.

it,
He goes back to the first straw, closes his hand around
closes his eyes, and pulls.

eyes,
eyelids to
He lifts the straw into frame before his squeezed-shut
raises his eyebrows, and slowly opens fluttering
look: short straw.

he
The Professor, smiling, opens his fist to confirm that
holds the last long one.

Gawain moans.

INT. MUNSON HOUSE - CELLAR - NIGHT

PULLING HIM UP THE STAIRS

him,
of
Slowly, slowly, Gawain mounts the cellar stairs. Behind
gathered in a semi-circle and looking up from the foot
the stairs, the other men wait.

Gawain
there is
reaches
As he plants one plodding foot in front of the other
raises the gun, slides back its primer to make sure
a round in the chamber, and then slides it shut as he

the door.

INT. MUNSON - LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

old
swings
In the foreground Mrs. Munson sits knitting, humming an
temperance tune. In the background the cellar door
open. Marva Munson doesn't notice; her knitting needles
continue their rhythmic clack.

cautious
We PULL Gawain, gun at the ready, as he takes slow,
steps across the floor.

bowed
We INTERCUT his POV of the back of the old lady's head,
over her knitting.

buries
As Gawain passes the sofa he picks up a cushion and
in it his hand holding the gun.

cautiously
He looks back up at the old lady. But now, still
approaching, he cocks his head, his expression bemused.

HIS POV

perspective
the
nearing the old lady is now different somehow. The
is somewhat lower; the humming woman sounds not quite
same; the rocking chair and the room itself are subtly
different.

WHEN WE CUT BACK TO GAWAIN

the
squirming
he is a runty, TEN-YEAR-OLD CHILD walking slowly across
floor; he is cradling not a gun in a pillow but a
little puppy dog.

Mrs.
The dog yips; the woman turns to look at us. It is not
Munson, but another black woman of about the same age.

MAMA

What you got there, Gawain?

CHILD GAWAIN

Why -- nothin', mama.

MAMA

Nothin' my ass! You got a dog there!

CHILD GAWAIN

No, Mama!

MAMA

A filthy noisy little pest of a puppy
dog gonna shit all over the house!

CHILD GAWAIN

He won't shit in the house, Mama,
I'm gonna train him, I promise, gonna
train him real good--

WHAP! She cuffs him on the side of his head.

MAMA

I'm gonna train you real good! I
told you don't bring no stray dogs
into this house!

WHAP! Another slap.

MAMA

...You wait til your Daddy gets home,
he gonna lay into you proper!

WHAP!

The little boy, weeping, throws his arms around his
mother:

CHILD GAWAIN

Please don't hurt me no more! I love
you, Mama!

MAMA

Daddy gonna kick your ass!

WHAP!

MAMA

...Bringin' in a filthy dirty dog!

WHAP! Gawain's little brothers and sisters, drawn by
the
commotion, have gathered excitedly to watch.

SISTER

Mama's whuppin' Gawain's ass!

BROTHER

(eagerly)

Ain't you gonna use the strap, Mama?

WHAP! WHAP! Gawain is sobbing:

CHILD GAWAIN

Please don't hurt me, Mama!

Now it is the adult Gawain blubbering.

turns to
The clack of knitting needles stops and Mrs. Munson
look.

MRS. MUNSON

What you doin'? What you doin' with
my pillow there?

sniveling:
He surreptitiously slides the gun into his pocket,

GAWAIN

I'm sorry, ma'am, I--

WHAP! She cuffs him on the side of the head.

MRS. MUNSON

I'm displeased with you! Colored boy
like you, falling in with that trash
downstairs!

WHAP!

MRS. MUNSON

...Ashamed a yourself! Didn't your
mama raise you right!

INT. MUNSON HOUSE - CELLAR - NIGHT

Gawain is tramping down the stairs.

GAWAIN

I can't do it!

The men are stunned.

DORR

Why... this is most... irregular.

GAWAIN

She reminds me of my mama. I can't shoot my mama! You motherfuckers just draw straws again.

PANCAKE

Wait a minute. You've got to accept your responsibilities, young man.

GAWAIN

Fuck you. And your irritated bowel. I can't shoot that old lady.

GENERAL

Must shoot!

PANCAKE

Now look here, it's the easiest thing in the world. Pretend her head is a casaba melon, and the gun is a melon-baller, and--

GAWAIN

What the fuck you talkin' about, man? You think this a melon-baller, you do it, man!

DORR

My my, this is most irregular.

PANCAKE

Look, with equal rights come equal responsibilities--

DORR

I'm afraid that Mr. Pancake is right, my dear fellow. We cannot draw straws again; the exercise loses all credibility if you show that the loser can simply beg off doing the job.

GENERAL

Must shoot!

Gawain shoves the gun toward Pancake.

GAWAIN

She just an old colored lady to you -- you do it, man!

PANCAKE

Why you sniveling little coward!

GAWAIN

What you say, you whiney motherfucker?
I come up your irritated ass with
this -- motherfuckin' gun--

He is waving the gun.

PANCAKE

You think you scare me, you mewling
punk! You don't scare me! Bull Connor
and all his dogs didn't scare me!

He shoves Gawain.

PANCAKE

...Be a man!

GAWAIN

You fuck!

He shoves him back.

Pancake shoves:

PANCAKE

Be a man!

GAWAIN

You ain't no fuckin' man, fuckin' a
sixty-year-old lady in pigtails!

PANCAKE

**WHY YOU BASTARD PUNK! MOUNTAIN GIRL
IS FIFTY-THREE!**

They are shoving each other now, getting into it.

PANCAKE

...SHE COULD RIDE YOUR ASS TO JELLY!

both
He lunges at him with a bear hug and his inertia sends
men tumbling to the floor, where they roll and wrestle.

DORR

Gentlemen, please!

GAWAIN

I seen Virginia hams I'd rather stick
my dick in than your old--

BANG! A muffled gunshot.

Quiet.

The two men have stopped rolling.

They stare at each other where they lie, Pancake on top.

At length:

PANCAKE

...Oh my god...

Horrified, he slowly rises.

PANCAKE

...I think he's hit!

The men gather round and look down.

Gawain still stares up at the ceiling.

Pancake stoops, waves his hand in front of his eyes. No reaction.

PANCAKE

...I'll just check the carotid artery.

He checks the carotid artery.

PANCAKE

...That's a negative.

LUMP

Oh, fuck.

DORR

Oh my.

LUMP

Is he dead, Professor?

PANCAKE

Sure he's dead. I checked his carotid artery.

DORR

Well this is most irregular. We will need a Hefty bag.

INT. MUNSON HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

THE CELLAR DOOR

peek
Creaking open. The Professor, Lump, and the General
out.

running.
The living room is empty but a sliver of the kitchen is
visible; its light is on, and we can hear water

Dorr hisses:

DORR

She is in the kitchen. I shall
distract her while you steal out
with the carcass.

INT. MUNSON HOUSE - KITCHEN - NIGHT

filling a
Dorr enters breezily; Mrs. Munson is at the sink,
teapot.

Munson
Dorr positions himself so that, to talk to him, Mrs.
has her back to the living room.

DORR

Well, my dear Mrs. Munson, I have
outlined your position to my
colleagues and I now return to you
to return our collective verdict.

MRS. MUNSON

Mm-hmm.

starts a
Behind her, the General peers around the corner and
catlike advance across the living room.

DORR

There was much spirited discussion
and an atmosphere of frank give-and-
take. Some of our number were
initially appalled at your proposal
that we simply return the money;
some were more receptive.

MRS. MUNSON

I don't care they was receptive or

not!

DORR

And that attitude, madam, was a factor in our discussions. To a man, I must say, they were devastated at the prospect of not being able to contribute to their respective charities.

room
fireman's

The General signals to Lump who now crosses the living with a big garbage bag slung over one shoulder in a carry.

MRS. MUNSON

Well that is a shame.

DORR

Indeed. But at the end of the day, your position prevailed, and the men have decided that we shall return the money -- every last cent of it! -- and attend Sunday services, rather than spend the remainder of our years wasting away in the Mississippi Men's Correctional Facility. Though that was the original preference of some.

MRS. MUNSON

Well I'm glad y'all came to see the light, anyway. I'm gonna have some tea and go to bed.

made it

The Professor, seeing that the General and Lump have out the door, is anxious to wind things up:

DORR

So the money shall be returned tomorrow at the opening of the casino office. Enjoy your tea, madam...

Backing out, he looks to one side.

pulling
Volkswagon
street.

Through the living room window he can see the hearse away from the curb. There is another car -- an old microbus -- slowly tooling the opposite way down the street.

Dorr looks back to Mrs. Munson.

DORR

...and congratulations on having recalled to the fold five poor, confused sheep who had momentarily strayed.

EXT. MISSISSIPPI RIVER - BRIDGE - NIGHT

looking We are at the middle of the bridge, the tower gargoyles blankly down at the doings below.

the In the misty night Lump and the General are braced over that railing, looking down, each holding one of the feet ankles. protrude from the Hefty bag cinched around Gawain's the two A cigarette burns on the General's lower lip. Behind men we can see the idling hearse.

General There is the toot of the garbage scow. Lump and the release Gawain's feet.

Their POV shows the sack receding and flumping into the garbage piled onto the scow that slips by below.

lifts A flock of scavenger birds, disturbed by the impact, off the scow with angry caws.

INT. MUNSON HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

window, Dorr skulks at a corner of the living room's picture peering out at the street.

EXT. MUNSON HOUSE - NIGHT

DOOR'S POV

street The Volkswagon microbus again cruises slowly down the been in the same direction as previously; apparently it has circling.

INT. MUNSON HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

The Professor scowls.

EXT. MUNSON HOUSE - NIGHT

DORR'S POV

The hearse pulls up to the curb.

INT. MUNSON HOUSE - CELLAR - NIGHT

The Professor clomps down the cellar stairs. Pancake is loading their digging implements into a satchel.

PANCAKE

They back yet?

Dorr is absent:

DORR

Yes... yes, they just arrived.

Pancake straightens from the satchel.

PANCAKE

Good. I'll go dump these in the hearse.

can
advances

He mounts the stairs with a satchel in either hand. We hear the front door opening as the other men enter. Dorr, bemused, but apparently moved by a hunch, slowly to the sackbutt case. He slides the catch that lets its spring clasp pop up. He lifts the lid. Mother Jones magazine. Piles of Mother Jones magazines.

DORR

What in heaven's name...

magazine,

He riffles a pile, confirming that it is in fact all no money.

Lump and the General are clomping down the stairs.

DORR

...General!

EXT. MUNSON HOUSE - NIGHT

either

We are PULLING Clark down the street, a satchel in hand.

HIS POV

idling.

The microbus, parked halfway down the block, ominously

THE BUS

from the

mirror

We are CLOSE on its side-view mirror. Someone leans driver's seat for a view into the mirror, and in the we see her, pigtails swinging: Mountain Girl.

HER POV

empty

Clark Pancake, still rather small, approaching up the street.

PANCAKE

corners

PULLING him again. A smile is beginning to play at the of his mouth.

PANCAKE

No extra share, huh...

The smile abruptly fades.

length:

He stops in his tracks for no discernible reason. At

PANCAKE

...Nnnrnf.

He pants.

Behind him, in the deep background, we see the General bounding into the street and silently toward us.

PANCAKE

...Oof!

clear
The moment passes. Pancake shakes his head, as if to
it, and resumes his walk.

HIS POV

We are nearing the bus.

THE BUS

back
Mountain Girl sits in the idling bus, waiting.
With a thunk and a gentle rock of the bus, we hear its
doors opening, and Pancake's voice.

PANCAKE

Mountain.

MOUNTAIN GIRL

Clark.

the
We hear an oof! of exertion as Pancake hoists each of
two satchels into the back. The oofs are followed by:

PANCAKE

...Nnrung! Aaarmh... Ninnnff...
Offffffllegghll...

MOUNTAIN GIRL

IBS, dear?

CUT TO:

WE

THE BACK OF THE BUS

to show Pancake being garotted by the General.

PANCAKE

Nnnnnmmmmfffgh!

EXT. MISSISSIPPI RIVER - BRIDGE - NIGHT

each
The tower gargoyle stares sightlessly down.
Lump and the General are at their accustomed place,
holding a foot shod in a large hiking boot.

Behind them we see the hearse idling.

railing as
Near them on the bridge, both hands grasping the
he gazes dreamily out into the night, is the Professor.

DORR

"...Like those Nicean barks of yore
That gently, o'er a perfumed sea..."

the
We hear the toot of the boat's horn and the men drop
body.

LUMP

Quick! Grab Clark!

out of
They quickly stoop and grab another bag-swaddled body
which even larger hiking boots protrude.

DORR

"...The weary, wayworn wanderer
bore... "

They drop the second body.

DORR

"...To his own native shore."

birds.
We hear the distant flump and the cawing of scavenger

INT. MUNSON HOUSE - CELLAR - NIGHT

CLOSE ON A FIST

With three protruding straws.

SWEATING CLOSE-UPS:

Lump picks a long straw: relief.

The General picks a short straw. A short grunt.

DORR

Excellent. I believe, at last, we
have the right man for the job.

INT. MUNSON HOUSE - MRS. MUNSON'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

open

Mrs. Munson lies on her back gently snoring. At the window, sheers ripple in the evening breeze.

o'clock.

A large clock ticks upon the mantle. It is almost one

INT. MUNSON HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

THE CELLAR DOOR

cigarette

It creaks open. The General looks stealthily out. A in his mouth plumes smoke.

He pushes the door fully open, emerges.

INT. MUNSON HOUSE - MRS. MUNSON'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Mrs. Munson's snore catches on an inhale. She mutters something, sighs, and resumes snoring.

INT. MUNSON HOUSE - STAIRCASE - NIGHT

stairway

The General treads lightly, noiselessly, up the leading to the second floor. He slides one hand into jacket, pulls out a garotte.

his

loop

With the faintest whoosh he whips it in a complicated and snags the other handle with his other hand.

INT. MUNSON HOUSE - UPSTAIRS HALLWAY - NIGHT

the

performs

mouth.

The General emerges from the staircase and advances on closed bedroom door. As he reaches for the knob he the no-handed flip of the burning cigarette into his

INT. MUNSON HOUSE - MRS. MUNSON'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

The door swings noiselessly open. The General pauses to survey:

The still room. The ticking clock. Mrs. Munson, a large sleeping mound upon the bed.

hands. The General advances, raising the garotte in both

He closes on her sleeping form.

The garotte is lowered toward her exposed neck.

It is a foot -- half a foot -- inches-away...

of-- Somewhere a muted gear ratchets and triggers the toll

instead The clock, striking one. It is a cuckoo clock but,
hand of a bird emerging, a berobed Jesus comes out with his
adoration. resting on the head of a child who gazes up in

freezes, The General starts at the noise and then suddenly
his eyes widening.

Jesus retreats back into the clock.

The General has swallowed his cigarette.

frenzy, He reaches up to his throat, panicked. In a silent
he yanks loose his ascot.

He gazes wildly about.

bedside. He reaches for the water glass at Mrs. Munson's

sound. He tips it back into his mouth. There is a rattling

HIS POV

uppers The uptilted water glass is sending false teeth -- full
and lowers -- rattling toward his face.

THE GENERAL

glass He frantically -- but still noiselessly -- sets the
throat. back down. Wildly looks about, one hand clamped to his

A mad but silent dash for the door.

INT. MUNSON HOUSE - UPSTAIRS HALLWAY - NIGHT

Plunging for the head of the stairs--

--a brief yowl from the cat--

hiss

--recoiling from where its tail has been stepped on, a
and a flash of its claws at the General's leg--

INT. MUNSON HOUSE - STAIRCASE/LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

bouncing

--and he falls down the stairs, each thudding impact
his body like a rag doll's.

At the bottom of the stairs he lies still.

A CLOSE-UP shows his head bent at an unnatural angle,
unblinking eyes staring. Traces of smoke wisp from each
nostril and his open mouth.

looks

Over the mantle, Othar returns the dead man's stare. He
somewhat smug.

INT. MUNSON HOUSE - CELLAR - NIGHT

slowly

The Professor and Lump, responding to the noise, look
up toward the ceiling.

EXT. MISSISSIPPI RIVER - BRIDGE - NIGHT

The body is laid out in a garbage bag by the rail.

The Professor stands looking at it, contemplatively.

Lump stands looking at it, contemplatively.

The cat sits nearby on its haunches looking at it,
impassively.

The professor muses:

DORR

...T'was our até brought us to this
pass...

LUMP

What, Professor?

manner is
There is the toot! of an approaching scow. Dorr's
still absent, his regard still on the corpse:

DORR

Our overweening pride... The old
woman is a more potent antagonist
than one had imagined...

He rouses himself, goes over to the bagged corpse. Lump
follows him and the two men hoist the body over the
rail.

DORR

...Now, Lump, I'm afraid it falls to
you to finish the job.

They let the body fall onto the scow passing below.

DORR

...The comedy must end.

Gawain's
The Professor turns to Lump and tries to hand him
gun, but Lump, uncomfortable, declines to take it.

LUMP

...Professor, I been doing some
thinking.

DORR

Oh dear. Oh dear oh dear oh dear.

LUMP

Maybe she's right! Maybe we should
be going to church!

DORR

Oh dear, Lump. I feared that those
would be your words. Not that I don't
appreciate your giving the matter
the benefit of your thought. But
please recall, young man, our
respective functions in this
enterprise. I am a professor, the
professor as you yourself so often
say, the thinker, the "brains of the
operation," trained in fact in the
arts of cogitation. You, Lump, are
the goon, the hooligan, the dumb

brute whose actions must be directed
by a higher intelligence.

LUMP

Yeah, I know, but--

DORR

No buts, dear boy! Do not repeat the
error of thinking! Now is the moment
of praxis! Now, my dear boy, you
must act!

thrusts Lump reluctantly takes the gun that the Professor
upon him.

LUMP

I can't do it, Professor! A nice old
lady like that!

DORR

Think of the riches, Lump, that you
and I alone shall divide! Recall the
dream of wealth untold that first
drew you to this enterprise!

LUMP

But--

DORR

And reflect also that if you decline
to act, forcing me to do so, then
you shall no longer have any
entitlement to the money! Your offices
shall have been nugatory!

LUMP

You mean -- you mean -- you're gonna
kill her?!

DORR

Of course! My hand would be forced!

LUMP

I can't let you do that, Professor!
A nice old lady like that!

DORR

You?! Allow? Not allow? What
presumption! You stupid boy! You
very very extremely stupid boy!

very

We hear the toot of an approaching scow -- this one long, sustained under all of the following:

LUMP

Oh yeah?

He points the gun at the Professor and--

LUMP

...Well who looks stupid now?

--squeezes -- click -- on an empty chamber.

LUMP

...Huh?

He turns the gun to have a look.

LUMP

...No bullets?

HIS POV

squeezes

shows the foreshortened barrel as he experimentally the trigger.

WE

CUT TO:

his

the Professor on the BANG! and, after a sad shake of head,

CUT

BACK TO:

rail.

Lump in time to see him finish toppling back over the

The scow-horn ends.

DORR

Perhaps... it had to be thus.

He goes to the railing to look down.

Disturbed

Lump, face-up on a pile of garbage, glides away. birds flap upward.

The professor muses:

DORR

"...Lo, in yon brilliant window-niche
How statue-like I see thee stand..."

His gaze rises with the ascending birds.

eyes

Among the white gulls is one black bird. The Professor
it as it rises past him.

DORR

...Hm. A raven?

FROM VERY HIGH

perch

we look down on the Professor, the black bird rising to
on the gargoye on the suspension tower in the

foreground.

masonry.

The bird settles on a loose, teetering piece of

BACK TO THE PROFESSOR

looking at the receding red light on the bridge of the
receding scow:

DORR

"...The agate lamp within thy hand...
"

BACK HIGH

perchless

The teetering chunk of masonry tips away and the
bird flaps off.

BACK TO THE PROFESSOR

time

very dreamy: he sees something in the distance, beyond
and space:

DORR

...Ah, Psyche! from the regions which
Are Holy land!"

scoring

This is punctuated by the crunching impact of masonry

lifeless.
barge
of
body
it
second-
receding

a direct hit on his head. He falls over the rail.
His cape snags on the railing and he hangs limp and
Directly below his dangling body the stern of Lump's
is slipping away to leave black waters and the clanking
chains.

The fabric of the Professor's cape begins to tear. His
drops in fits and starts as the fabric gives way.
Finally the body rips free. It falls away from us. As
does so the clanking chains are pulling into view the
banger -- a garbage barge being chain-towed by the
scow.

Dorr's body lands neatly on the barge.

A gust of wind.

away
The cape flaps free of the railing and is wind-tossed
amidst the cawing birds.

The cat, watching, blinks.

INT. MUNSON HOUSE - MRS. MUNSON'S BEDROOM - DAY

DRINKING GLASS

It is resting on the very edge of the night table --
protruding, in fact, past the table's edge.

It is morning. We hear rustling from the bed.

empty
Hands reach INTO FRAME and hesitate, finding the glass
of water and precariously perched.

MRS. MUNSON (O.S.)

Hmm.

The hands tip the glass and take the teeth. We hear
complicated oral noises.

EXT. MUNSON HOUSE - DAY

on the
we

The door opens away to reveal the morning paper lying
stoop. Mrs. Munson leans INTO FRAME to pick it up and
ADJUST as she straightens to have a look:

LUCK

The headline says: \$2.6 MILLION DISAPPEARS FROM LADY
CASINO. The subhead: POLICE BAFFLED.

MRS. MUNSON

Mm-hm.

INT. MUNSON HOUSE - CELLAR - DAY

Mrs. Munson is walking down the stairs.

MRS. MUNSON

Professor!

She stops midway down and looks:

The empty cellar.

Money stacked neatly on the card table.

Mrs. Munson sadly shakes her head.

MRS. MUNSON

...Hmm. Couldn't face the music.

EXT. SAUCIER MUNICIPAL BUILDING - DAY

She

Mrs. Munson is climbing the porch in her Sunday best.
feints at the dog who lies curled in the sun:

MRS. MUNSON

Scoot now! Outa the way!

INT. SAUCIER MUNICIPAL BUILDING - DAY

today
enter,

The sheriff is busy on the phone; there is a DEPUTY
also on the phone. The sheriff, seeing Mrs. Munson
covers the phone with one hand.

SHERIFF WYNER

Miz Munson.

MRS. MUNSON

Sheriff, I gotta make a statement.

SHERIFF WYNER

Could it possibly wait, ma'am? We're a little busy today.

MRS. MUNSON

I guess it can wait, but it's about that casino money.

The sheriff exchanges a significant look with the deputy,
then murmurs into the phone:

SHERIFF WYNER

Call you right back.

He cradles the phone and smiles at Mrs. Munson.

SHERIFF WYNER

...You know something about it?

MRS. MUNSON

Something? Everything! I got it at home.

SHERIFF WYNER

You... you have what at home, now?

MRS. MUNSON

The money. Two point six million dollars. Down in my root cellar. All stacked up nice and neat.

SHERIFF WYNER

Mm-hmm.

The deputy pauses to look up from his phone:

DEPUTY

How'd it get there, Marva?

MRS. MUNSON

Bunch a desperate men that stole it put it there, that's how! They was musicians of the Renaissance period, played the sackbutt and so on -- well, it turns out they really couldn't play, although they could recite poems to break your heart. Their ringleader speaks in dead

tongues.

SHERIFF WYNER

Does he now.

MRS. MUNSON

I tried to get you to see him! That night?

SHERIFF WYNER

Oh yes.

MRS. MUNSON

I had to yell at 'em 'bout stealin' all that money and I guess I made 'em feel pretty bad 'cause they picked up and left without takin' the money. But I was peeved with 'em, Sheriff, they'd been up to all sorts of mischief, come close to blowin' up the house, disturbed Othar no end.

SHERIFF WYNER

Angry, was he?

MRS. MUNSON

Wouldn't you be? All that racket!

SHERIFF WYNER

I expect so.

MRS. MUNSON

And they let Pickles out too!

The sheriff sighs.

SHERIFF WYNER

So you want us to go fetch him.

MRS. MUNSON

No, he's back, but what you want me to do with the money?

SHERIFF WYNER

Well...

back at
He and the deputy exchange looks. The sheriff looks
Mrs. Munson.

SHERIFF WYNER

...Why don't you just keep it, Miz

Munson.

MRS. MUNSON

Keep it?

DEPUTY

You keep it, Marva.

MRS. MUNSON

Well... I know it's only a penny
offa everybody's policy...

SHERIFF WYNER

How's that ma'am?

MRS. MUNSON

I know folks don't much care. Could
I... You s'pose I could...

SHERIFF WYNER

Yes ma'am?

MRS. MUNSON

Could I give it all to Bob Jones
University?

SHERIFF WYNER

That'd be nice, ma'am.

She picks up her handbag and heads for the door.

MRS. MUNSON

...Well, long as everybody knows.

SHERIFF WYNER

Thank you for the information, ma'am.

MRS. MUNSON

You're welcome, sheriff. Just doin'
my duty.

EXT. SAUCIER, MISSISSIPPI - DAY

Mrs. Munson is walking home. It is a beautiful spring
day.

From far off, wafting toward us on the breeze, we can
hear
the church chorus singing. Mrs. Munson joins in. She
has a
strong voice:

MRS. MUNSON

Leaning, Leaning, Safe and secure
from all harm. Lean on Jesus, Lean
on Jesus, Leaning on the everlasting
arm.

She turns up the walk to her house.

MRS. MUNSON

...What a fellowship, What a peace
of mind, Safe and secure from all
harm. Lean on Jesus, Lean on Jesus,
Leaning on the everlasting arm...

When she opens the front door the cat slips out.

MRS. MUNSON

...Pickles!

It races off down the street.

MRS. MUNSON

...Pickles!

EXT. MISSISSIPPI RIVER - BRIDGE - DAY

of an

Pickles scurries along the walkway. We hear the toot!
approaching scow.

head

The cat reaches the middle of the bridge. He sticks his
through the bars of the railing.

water,

When we CUT CLOSE on the cat as he looks down at the
we see that he holds in his mouth a human finger.

and

As the scow passes underneath, the cat opens its mouth
lets the finger drop.

it

The finger falls away and is barely visible by the time
hits the scow.

sideways

The cat looks up INTO THE LENS, and blinks. Its
irises adjust.

its

The scow is gliding away. With the low mournful toot of

where

horn we tilt up the river to the great garbage island
scavenger birds pick through the trash.

THE END