

The Lucky Rabbit

By

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(a spec pilot)

FIRST DRAFT

TEASER

INT. HOTEL, HALLWAY - NIGHT

LOOKING DOWN the length of the hallway, we SEE a MAN walking towards us. Late-twenties, with handsome features that look tired but still restless, he walks all the way to the door just in front of us.

He knocks.

NARRATOR (V.O.)

I hadn't been in Reno in eighteen years.

A MAN'S voice answers from inside.

VOICE (O.S.)

Who is it?

MAN

(beat)

Michael Buckley.

He waits.

NARRATOR (V.O.)

Until now, I had no reason to come back.

We HEAR the door being unlocked from the inside. A long BEAT.

NARRATOR (V.O.) (cont'd)

But my father just died.

VOICE (O.S.)

Come in.

CLOSE ON Michael. He looks nervous.

NARRATOR (V.O.)

And that was the best reason of all.

Michael slowly pushes the door open. The room inside is unlit. He peers into darkness, trying to let his eyes adjust to no light. They don't.

He takes a deep breath, steels himself, then steps forward into the blackness.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. RENO DESERT - NIGHT

HEAVY BREATHING as a MAN runs, his arms flailing wildly. FOLLOW him as he kicks up sand and dirt and awkwardly navigates through thick brush. He's panting because he's out of shape, and out of time. One more thing -- he's naked.

NARRATOR (V.O.)

That's him there. The guy with the flabby white ass.

CAMERA'S closing in. Close enough to tell that the Man's panting only partially covers his sobbing.

He trips and we're on top of him. He begins to crawl as he tries in vain to get his feet under him.

MAN

(through tears)  
Don't kill me...

He crawls a few more feet then turns onto his back, his terror-filled eyes staring death in the face. He kicks and pushes through the sand as if he could backstroke his way through a hundred of miles of desert.

Tonight the world desert backstroke record will be safe.

MAN (cont'd)

(sobbing)  
I don't want to die...

Finally we HEAR the POP of a gunshot as the IMAGE FREEZES.

NARRATOR (V.O.)

My father died a lot like he lived.  
Pathetic, humiliated, and the  
object of great speculation.

EXT. STREET, RENO - DAY

To show a small, dated-looking casino at the end of the strip. Bigger, better, and nicer casino's flank it on every side.

NARRATOR (V.O.)

This is The Lucky Rabbit. It was his casino. One of the first in Reno.

INT. LUCKY RABBIT - CONTINUOUS

Old machines taking money from older patrons, who sit on even older, tattered bar stools that have lost the battle of time. The carpet is ugly, and the room smells of smoke and perspiration.

NARRATOR (V.O.)

To call the casino retro is to pretend it looks this way for a reason.

INT. LUCKY RABBIT, KITCHEN - CONTINUOUS

Men in ugly pastel uniforms make drinks poured from gallon-sized plastic bottles. Everything about this place says second rate.

NARRATOR (V.O.)

But the people came anyway. Free drinks will do that.

INT. LUCKY RABBIT, MAIN ROOM - CONTINUOUS

A PIT BOSS with a bad toupee makes change for a middle-aged COCKTAIL WAITRESS. Her miniskirt is short, but the only thing sexy about her are her memories. She makes her way through the crowd, her tray dancing ballet-like in front of her.

NARRATOR (V.O.)

Yeah, my father owned it. But my grandfather was the one who built it.

EXT. DESERT - FLASHBACK

Stock-like footage shows a MAN in a leather vest and cowboy hat, standing with a group of people. They've congregated just off the road, right in the middle of nothing.

NARRATOR (V.O.)

My grandfather was the guy with the vision... And the brains, and the balls, and the money.

The Man in the cowboy hat picks up a shovel, then sticks it into the ground. He pulls up a pile of dirt and throws it over his shoulder.

Although the wind grabs the sand and shoves it right back into the people's faces, they applaud anyway. The Man in the cowboy hat smiles.

NARRATOR (V.O.) (cont'd)

When my grandfather died, it gave my father the opportunity to run everything he built into the ground... And that's exactly what he did.

INT. HOTEL SUITE - NIGHT

A Man and a WOMAN are sitting on a couch in a large suite. He's the naked guy we saw in the desert, only now he's just shirtless. The Woman wears only a bra and panties.

MUSIC is playing loud in the background as he takes a big hit from a crack pipe. She motions for him to share, and he passes the pipe over.

NARRATOR (V.O.)

Ruining things was what he did best. You see, my father is what you'd call in clinical terms... a freak.

The shirtless Man stands and does a little impromptu jig. We SEE two other MEN sitting in the corner. One white, one black. They look over and begin to laugh.

The Woman exhales her hit, then also begins to laugh at the dancing, shirtless Man.

NARRATOR (V.O.) (cont'd)

The girl with him is Destiny. She's a dancer at the Funny Farm, the local strip club. She was my Father's girlfriend.

Destiny gets up and starts to dance, only she's grinding, the way she might on-stage.

NARRATOR (V.O.) (cont'd)

Destiny loved my father for who he was. As long as he was a guy who provided all the money and coke she ever needed.

Destiny puts her arms around the dancing Man and pulls him into a wet, sloppy kiss.

NARRATOR (cont'd)  
But that was before the desert.

The IMAGE SLOWS UNTIL IT STOPS, freeze-framing Destiny and the shirtless Man in all their fucked-up glory.

NARRATOR (V.O.) (cont'd)  
That's around the time Joe Smith came to Reno.

INT. LUCKY RABBIT, CASINO - DAY

As a MAN steps through the front doors. He's tall and lean, with a shock of thick hair the color of his black suit.

He stops just inside the doors to survey the room. The IMAGE FREEZES.

NARRATOR (V.O.)  
That's Joe. At least that's what he calls himself. As far as I know, that was the first time he ever set foot in the casino.

RETURN TO LIVE ACTION to show Joe look over toward one of the gaming tables. There's a GUY with a cigarette, tapping the ashes from it on the carpet.

NARRATOR (V.O.) (cont'd)  
And the place would never be the same again.

Joe Smith walks over to the CIGARETTE GUY. He stands close, right next to him. When Cigarette Guy gets tired of ignoring him, he looks over.

CIGARETTE GUY  
You got a problem?

JOE SMITH  
Not a problem per-se.

CIGARETTE GUY  
(confused)  
What?

JOE SMITH  
I would say it's more of a question... I noticed you're letting the ashes from your cigarette fall on the carpet.

CIGARETTE GUY

So?

JOE SMITH

So there's an ashtray on the table.

The Man finishes playing his hand. He loses. He glares at Joe Smith.

CIGARETTE GUY

You with the casino?

JOE SMITH

No.

CIGARETTE GUY

Then don't worry about it.

Joe smiles as Cigarette guy places another bet. He goes back to ignoring Joe, who continues to stand next to him.

JOE SMITH

Excuse me if I seem a little slow.  
I'm trying to figure out why a guy  
would dump ashes on the carpet,  
when he could just as easily put  
them in an ashtray where they  
belong?

Cigarette Guy, clearly annoyed, picks up the ashtray and dumps the dirty, gray contents all over Joe's shoes. When the ashtray is empty he tosses it at Joe's feet, and it goes rolling a few feet away.

CIGARETTE GUY

Because I can't reach it. Now you understand?

Joe smiles again, amused.

JOE SMITH

Now it makes perfect sense.

FREEZE FRAME on Joe, smiling pleasantly.

NARRATOR (V.O.)

At the time, nobody in the casino  
knew Joe.

RETURN TO LIVE ACTION as Joe pats Cigarette guy on the shoulder

JOE SMITH  
You have a good day.

Then turns and walks away. As he goes, we SEE something in his eyes. Something dangerous.

NARRATOR (V.O.)  
Not yet.

As Joe goes he passes Michael, standing over by the slots. Michael turns to watch Joe Smith walk out the front doors of the dark casino, disappearing into the glare of the bright, Reno sun.

END TEASER

ACT ONE

INT. LAW FIRM, CONFERENCE ROOM - DAY

CAMERA MOVES through the wide double-doors and into a small, modestly appointed conference room.

Folding chairs sit in neat rows facing a lectern. Family sits in the front row, but every chair in the room is occupied as the crowd waits for the entertainment to begin.

NARRATOR (V.O.)

If you limited attendance to people who cared about my father, you could hold the reading of his will in a phone booth. But since casino's are known to make money, and people held out hope that he managed to keep some, the place was standing room only.

An old LAWYER in a dark, gray suit steps up behind the lectern and pulls a pair of reading glasses out of his breast coat pocket.

LAWYER

Since we're all here, why don't we begin.

He picks up a long, knife-like letter opener and uses it to gut the sealed envelope lying in front of him.

INT. LAW FIRM, LOBBY - CONTINUOUS

The elevator doors open and a black, shiny pair of Italian loafers steps out. WE'RE LOW, following the expensive calfskin down the hallway and around a corner. They stop in front of the double-doors, then pass through.

INT. LAW FIRM, CONFERENCE ROOM - CONTINUOUS

The Old Lawyer stops reading and glances up at the late-arrival. He stops long enough to pique people's curiosity, and the entire room turns in their seats to look.

REVERSE TO SHOW Joe Smith, standing in the back of the room.

LAWYER

(to Joe)

I believe there's a seat in front.

JOE SMITH

I'm alright.

CLOSE ON THE CROWD to show a MAN and a WOMAN, sitting together in the front row just underneath the Old Lawyer. Attractive and smartly dressed, the two look to be in their late twenties.

MAN

(quietly to Woman)

Who's that?

WOMAN

(quietly to Man)

Who cares.

And they turn back to face the front. FREEZE FRAME on the Man and Woman.

NARRATOR (V.O.)

That guy's PETER. The girl is PENNY. They're my brother and sister.

LIVE ACTION as Peter and Penny both look bored. Especially Peter. He gets ready to leave as the Old Lawyer's voice drones on in the background.

PETER

Let me know what happens.

PENNY

(firm)

Sit down you stupid moron.

Peter sits back in his chair.

PETER

(quietly)

Bitch.

FREEZE FRAME.

NARRATOR (V.O.)

That's half-brother and sister. I want to make that very clear.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. LAW FIRM, CONFERENCE ROOM - LATER

The Old Lawyer's still droning, only now he's gotten to the good part.

OLD LAWYER

... That brings us to real property assets... I leave my home, located on 3131 Sunburst Lane, in the city of Reno, Nevada, to my Son, Peter Buckley, and my daughter, Penny Buckley. Said property to be divided equally between them.

Peter and Penny couldn't care less.

OLD LAWYER (cont'd)

As for the hotel and casino property...

Now Peter and Penny perk up a little bit.

OLD LAWYER (cont'd)

... Registered and incorporated as The Lucky Rabbit, I also leave my entire 50 and one-half percent share... less one percent...

Peter and Penny aren't sure they heard him right.

PETER

Did he say less one percent? What does less one percent mean?

PENNY

Shut up.

OLD LAWYER

... To my son, Peter Buckley, and daughter, Penny Buckley... The remaining one percent I leave to...

(beat)

Joseph Smith.

ON THE CROWD, who collectively think to themselves "who the fuck is Joseph Smith"

PENNY

(quietly)

Who the fuck is Joseph Smith?

SMASH CUT to the back of the conference room to show the double doors swinging shut.

NARRATOR (V.O.)

Now people know who Joe Smith is...  
At least by name.

INT. LAW FIRM, CONFERENCE ROOM - A FEW MINUTES LATER.

The reading is over, at least for the Old Lawyer. But Peter is still jawing him up good as the old guy puts his papers away.

PETER

... I never heard of Joseph  
Smith... Isn't it strange that my  
father would leave some of our  
casino to someone I never heard of?

All the Old Lawyer is thinking about now is a nap.

ANGLE ON TWO MEN in suits sitting nearby. They look like bank types because they are. One Man stands to wait his turn to confront the old Lawyer. FREEZE FRAME on him.

NARRATOR (V.O.)

That's FRED INGERHOFF. He's Vice-  
President of Reno Bank and Trust.  
My father was in hock to his bank  
to the tune of 49 and one half  
percent of the casino. That,  
combined with the 49 and one half  
percent Peter and Penny just  
inherited for being born makes  
ninety nine percent.

EXT. LAW FIRM, STREET - CONTINUOUS

LIVE ACTION as Joe walks out the building's doors and toward a black Mercedes Benz parked at the curb.

NARRATOR (V.O.)

And if you took the 99 percent  
Peter and Penny share with Fred and  
the bank, and you added Joe Smith's  
one percent to that... Well... you  
know.

Joe opens the passengers door, looks at the nicely dressed, SILVER-HAIRED GUY behind the wheel, then slips inside.

The Mercedes peels off the curb and into traffic.

NARRATOR (V.O.) (cont'd)  
 Oh, people complained about it...  
 Loud.

INT. LAW FIRM, CONFERENCE ROOM - CONTINUOUS

The Old Lawyer picks up his paperwork and starts for the exit. Peter and Fred walk on either side of him, protesting.

NARRATOR (V.O.)  
 Peter and Penny even threatened to  
 sue. But the will was specific  
 enough, at least for the executor.

CLOSE ON OLD LAWYER. He could give a shit.

INT. HOTEL, SUITE - DAY

Staring out the balcony doors and onto a panoramic view of the Reno strip. Joe walks into FRAME. He walks all the way to the balcony railing and stops.

NARRATOR (V.O.)  
 So for now, Joseph Smith had his  
 one percent.

CLOSE ON JOE SMITH to show a slight but satisfied grin.

NARRATOR (V.O.) (cont'd)  
 But things were about to get  
 interesting.

EXT. DESERT - NIGHT (THREE WEEKS EARLIER)

The previous scene of the murder is now a genuine police murder scene, with flashing lights and cops and cop cars and cop tape keeping out who knows what.

And there's a body on the desert sand, covered with a blanket. CAMERA PANS UP to show DETECTIVE ROGER MAYWEATHER. Early fifties but fit, sporting a gray crew-cut that makes him look more military man than murder cop.

Approaching him is REGGIE RIVERS, a young, green, African-American detective. He's Roger's new partner. He hands Roger a styrofoam cup filled with coffee. Roger takes a sip, frowns.

ROGER  
This isn't Starbucks?

REGGIE  
(sarcastic)  
You noticed.

ROGER  
Where's the Starbucks?

REGGIE  
About thirty miles that way.

Roger continues to stare disapprovingly at the coffee.  
Reggie sees what's coming.

REGGIE (cont'd)  
I'm not going all the way back to  
town to get you coffee.

Roger smells the brew. It doesn't smell any better than it  
tastes.

REGGIE (cont'd)  
Come on, man... Is this one of  
those fuck the new guy things, or  
just one of those fuck the black  
guy things?

No response. Reggie grabs the coffee out of Roger's hand.

REGGIE (cont'd)  
Give me the God-damned coffee.

And he starts toward the car.

ROGER  
Forget it. We won't be here that  
long.

Reggie stops. He sees Roger look over at a veteran CRIME  
SCENE TECH and smile.

REGGIE  
Oh, that's funny.

Reggie throws the cup on the sand and steps back to where  
Roger stands.

REGGIE (cont'd)  
'Cuz I'm new and I can't tell when  
you guys are joking yet, right?

REGGIE (cont'd)  
(to Tech)  
Did you like that?

The Crime Tech smiles and nods.

Roger leans down to pull the blanket off the vic. We recognize him as the guy in the first scene, give or take about 24 hours of decomposition.

REGGIE (cont'd)  
(grimacing)  
Jesus.

ROGER  
What do you see?

Reggie leans in for a better look

REGGIE  
Male. Recently deceased... Fifties  
maybe?... Gunshot or shots to the  
head, and chest.

ROGER  
What else?

Reggie gives it another long look, comes up empty. A BEAT.

ROGER (cont'd)  
He's naked.

REGGIE  
Well yeah... That's obvious.

Roger throws the blanket back over the Vic.

ROGER  
(to Crime Tech)  
A hundred yards in all directions.  
We'll send a chopper up at dawn to  
do a bigger sweep.

CRIME TECH  
You got it.

Roger starts back toward the car. Reggie follows.

REGGIE  
You didn't say you wanted obvious.

INT. ROGERS CAR - CONTINUOUS

Roger's inside as Reggie slips into the passenger seat.

REGGIE  
So what now?

ROGER  
We see the family.

REGGIE  
You make an ID?

ROGER  
ROD BUCKLEY.

REGGIE  
(beat)  
The casino guy?

ROGER  
Yup.

Roger starts the car and they make their way back toward the road.

REGGIE  
Wow.

ROGER  
You know why he's out here?

REGGIE  
No.

ROGER  
There's a rumor Rod had a stash of  
silver bars, hidden in a bunker out  
in the desert.

Reggie looks back, impressed.

REGGIE  
Silver bars? No kidding... So why  
was he naked?

ROGER  
(beat)  
How should I know?

Stupid question. Reggie makes a mental note not to do that again. FREEZE FRAME ON ROGER AND REGGIE.

NARRATOR (V.O.)  
Roger Mayweather was the smartest  
cop in Reno.

NARRATOR(cont'd)

People that didn't know him often mistook him for the dumb redneck type, which he kind of was too. Unless somebody got murdered. Then he was the guy you hoped wouldn't come knocking on your door.

CUT TO:

EXT. PETER'S CONDO - NIGHT

Roger's big fist knocks hard on the wooden door. A BEAT, then an irritated Peter opens the door.

PETER

Yeah?

HOLD ON PETER as he dials the attitude down.

ROGER (V.O.)

When was the last time you spoke to your father?

INT. PETER'S CONDO - NIGHT

Peter and Penny are distraught. At least they look like they're distraught.

Sitting across from them are Roger and Reggie.

PETER

Let me think... Oh, it was three days ago. I stopped by the hotel in the morning...

INT. HOTEL SUITE - MORNING

Peter enters. Drug paraphernalia and empty bottles of booze litter the table and floor. The Two Men we saw watching the party are there, sleeping on the couches. Peter closes the door and heads for the bedroom.

INT. HOTEL SUITE, BEDROOM - MORNING

He opens the door to reveal Rod and Destiny, in bed, asleep. Peter walks to the bed and grabs Destiny.

PETER

Get up... Wake up!

DESTINY  
What...?

PETER  
Out... Now!

DESTINY  
Stop pushing.

She stumbles out of bed, naked. Peter grabs her clothes and throws them at her. He takes her arm and bum rushes her out of the room.

DESTINY (cont'd)  
Rod...

PETER  
Hey, whore, I'm not telling you again. Get out!

Finally, Rod stirs.

ROD  
(groggy)  
Peter... what are you doing?

Peter looks at Rod with disgust. FREEZE FRAME ON PETER AND ROD.

ROGER (V.O.)  
And you spoke to your father that morning?

PETER (V.O.)  
Yes.

ROGER (V.O.)  
What was his mood like?

PETER (V.O.)  
Great. He was in a good spirits, as far as I could tell.

LIVE ACTION to show Rod slip back into unconsciousness.

PETER (V.O.) (cont'd)  
I remember thinking I hadn't seen him looking that alive in a long time.

INT. PETER'S CONDO - CONTINUOUS

Penny is watching Roger, like a hunter sizing up the competition.

PETER

People loved my father... He had problems, I think everybody knew that. But...

(faking emotion)

Who would do something like that?

Roger stands. Reggie does too.

ROGER

Thanks for your cooperation.

PETER

I hope it helps.

Peter and Penny stand as well. A BEAT, and Peter looks at Penny as if to say "chime in whenever you want."

PENNY

My brother and I are available to you anytime, Officer.

Roger gives her another look. This is a chick that makes a guy wonder. Roger starts to go. He stops at the sound of Reggie's voice.

REGGIE

Could you tell us where you two were last night?

PETER

Here. My sister and I made dinner, and then we watched tv.

Roger starts to walk again, but Reggie's voice stops him, again.

REGGIE

Is there anyone who could verify that?

PETER

(beat)

Well... I can verify my sister... And she can verify me.

Reggie asked another stupid question.

INT. ROGERS CAR - CONTINUOUS

Roger and Reggie get into the car.

REGGIE

You were going to ask 'em  
eventually.

Roger glares over, then starts the car.

INT. PETER'S CONDO - CONTINUOUS

A smiling Peter walks up with a just opened bottle of champagne. Penny is standing by the window, peeking out.

PETER

Merry Christmas.

PENNY

It's June.

Peter smiles and pours her a glass. Standing very close to each other, they both take a sip.

PETER

Things are going to be very good  
for us from now on.

Penny's quiet. Peter looks into her eyes, leans in to kiss her. She turns her head slightly to take it on the cheek.

Peter looks at her again. Smiles.

END OF ACT ONE

ACT TWO

INT. LUCKY RABBIT - MORNING

The main room is about one quarter filled as A THIN WHITE MAN, fifties, strolls through the slots. FOLLOW HIM through the main room until he reaches a door at the far end. He knocks twice, and is buzzed in.

INT. LUCKY RABBIT, OFFICES - CONTINUOUS

Thin Man steps over to a desk where a great-looking blonde SECRETARY sits. We SEE there's something on her mind. Thin Man doesn't, because he's busy looking at his phone messages.

SECRETARY

There's a man waiting to see you.

THIN MAN

Tell him I'm busy.

SECRETARY

He's in your office.

Thin Man looks up at her.

THIN MAN

Who is he?

SECRETARY

He said his name was Mr. Smith.

FREEZE FRAME on Thin Man.

NARRATOR (V.O.)

That's TONY PANETTI, the General Manager. He's the guy that's responsible for anything and everything that happens inside the casino. Truth is, Tony couldn't manage his kid's lemonade stand. What he could do was keep my father out of the loop. So far out that he wouldn't know Tony was robbing him blind.

LIVE ACTION.

THIN MAN/TONY  
He got a first name?

SECRETARY  
Joe.

Tony drops his messages on the her desk, and steps inside the office.

INT. LUCKY RABBIT, TONY'S OFFICE - CONTINUOUS

Joe is standing behind Tony's desk, reading from framed clippings hung on the wall.

Tony enters, but Joe continues to stare at the clippings. Tony doesn't like it one bit.

TONY  
If you want to see me, you need to make an appointment.

JOE SMITH  
I thought about it...

Joe turns to face him.

JOE SMITH (cont'd)  
(smiling)  
But then I figured I was already here, so... What the hell.

TONY  
You figured wrong.

Joe keeps smiling, and staring back at Tony.

JOE SMITH  
How long you been running this place, Tony?

TONY  
You hear what I just said?

JOE SMITH  
I took a walk around, just to get a feel for the place...  
(shakes his head)  
It's not good.

Tony's not happy.

JOE SMITH (cont'd)  
 So I asked myself, what could a guy  
 be so busy doing all day that he  
 lets his business get to this  
 point?

Joe motions over to the clippings.

JOE SMITH (cont'd)  
 Then I see the wall, and it's clear  
 to me... Bowling.

CLOSE ON ONE OF THE FRAMED CLIPPINGS. We SEE a picture of  
 Tony at the bowling alley, standing with a few pals behind an  
 enormous trophy.

Tony is mad. Joe shrugs, starts to laugh.

JOE SMITH (cont'd)  
 The man's a great bowler.

Tony cracks a smile, but there's nothing happy behind it.

TONY  
 I know who you are. You're mister  
 one percent. You know what I think  
 of that? Put your little one  
 percent on the desk and I'll piss  
 on it for you.

JOE SMITH  
 (sniffing the air)  
 From the smell in here, I'd bet you  
 already have.

Joe laughs harder. Tony laughs too, like the can't believe  
 the balls on this guy.

TONY  
 Hang on a second, I got somebody I  
 want you to meet.

JOE SMITH  
 Don't bother security, they need  
 their sleep.

He steps out from behind the desk and stands toe to toe with  
 Tony.

JOE SMITH (cont'd)

But, Tony, I would encourage you, during this transitional period, to take stock of things. Not just the casino, but also your place in it. There are several key personnel decisions that have yet to be made, and between you and me... Your position here is one of them.

Tony's thinking of all kinds of fun ways Joe Smith could die.

TONY

Thanks for the tip.

Joe exits the office. Tony looks out after him, staring daggers.

INT. INTERNATIONAL HOUSE OF PANCAKES - DAY

Peter enters, looks around. He sees what he's looking for, and heads into the restaurant.

He walks over to a booth at the far end of the restaurant. A booth by the window, with a view of the street. There, sitting alone, is Joe. He's reading the paper as Peter sits across from him.

PETER

Joe Smith?

Joe keeps reading. Peter looks across at Joe's unfinished Grand Slam breakfast. He reaches over and takes a slice of bacon.

Finally, Joe looks over his paper at Peter.

JOE SMITH

What if that seat is taken?

PETER

Too bad.

Peter smiles, pleased with himself. Then again, pleased with himself is the state Peter permanently resides in.

A Man approaches the booth. He's the Grey-Haired Guy who picked Joe up after the reading of he will.

He looks a little more fearsome when he's standing up.

JOE'S GUY  
 (to Peter)  
 Hey, how you doing?

Peter looks up and a lot of his bravado heads for the exit.

JOE'S GUY (cont'd)  
 (to Joe)  
 Didn't know you were expecting  
 anyone.

JOE SMITH  
 Peter's my new business partner.

Joe's guy looks at Peter, who starts to fidget nervously.

JOE'S GUY  
 Oh, yeah.  
 (to Joe)  
 You want me to wait?

JOE SMITH  
 Give us a minute.

Joe's guy smiles at Peter, then walks off. Joe gives Peter his complete attention.

PETER  
 I've been looking for you.

EXT. INTERNATIONAL HOUSE OF PANCAKES - CONTINUOUS

Looking THROUGH THE WINDOW at the booth. From the street, even at a high rate of speed, Joe would be clearly visible.

JOE SMITH  
 You must not have looked too  
 hard... You want something?  
 Eggs... short stack?

PETER  
 I don't eat at places like this.

Remember, some of Peter's bravado stayed behind.

INT. INTERNATIONAL HOUSE OF PANCAKES, BOOTH - CONTINUOUS

JOE SMITH  
 I know what you mean. You really  
 got to watch the calories in here?

PETER  
Did you kill my father?

Joe laughs.

JOE SMITH  
No.

PETER  
Then how did you get that share?

A BEAT.

JOE SMITH  
(beat)  
The Passport Breakfast is good,  
too. I like the Swedish pancakes  
with the lingonberries.

PETER  
I don't really care how you got it,  
because eventually someone's going  
to find out, and then you'll be in  
jail, or you'll be dead.

Peter's trying to size Joe up. But that's like a tic-tac-toe  
player trying to beat Gary Kasparov in chess.

JOE SMITH  
That any way to talk to your new  
partner?

PETER  
Fifty grand, that's as high as I'll  
go. You can have a suite at the  
hotel for a week, all expenses  
paid.

JOE SMITH  
A whole week! Wow. And all I have  
to do is sign over my share?

PETER  
The casino's broke, it'll probably  
go under.

Joe picks up the entertainment section. Peter's watching  
him, still trying to figure this guy out.

PETER (cont'd)  
What are you getting? One percent  
of a dump. What's that get you?

PETER (cont'd)

Your buddies back home going to think you're a big-time guy? A casino owner. Save yourself the headache, Joe. A lot of people are looking to take you down, and it's only a matter of time... So take the money, grab a t-shirt out of the gift shop, and go back to wherever the fuck you came from.

Joe studies him for a long BEAT, then shakes his head.

JOE SMITH

No... You got to sell that more. I didn't feel it, you know what I mean?

Peter stares back blankly.

JOE SMITH (cont'd)

It wasn't a threat...  
(checking)  
At least I don't think it was a threat.

More blank look.

JOE SMITH (cont'd)

If you're going to tell a guy to go... I mean, really go... You got to come up with a real reason. The buddy thing...  
(shrugs)  
Cute, but who cares. When it comes to money, friends don't matter. And that line about people. How did you say it... "a lot of people want to take me down?"... What people? Cops? Girl scouts?... Ninjas?

This isn't going nearly as well as Peter wanted.

JOE SMITH (cont'd)

Take my advice, forget the threats. You can't pull it off. Come at it another way. You ever train a dog?... Better to reward it when it's good than punish it when it's bad.

PETER

I don't understand.

JOE SMITH

Find out what I really want? What do I like? What do I do for kicks, that kind of thing?

PETER

(unsure)  
Okay.

JOE SMITH

Try it again.

He picks up the paper and sits back.

JOE SMITH (cont'd)

I'll pretend like I'm not expecting it.

Peter takes BEAT, then begins.

PETER

(awkward)  
So Joe... What do you really want?

Joe smiles.

JOE SMITH

Funny you should ask that, Pete, because I really want to have some fun.

PETER

Yeah?

JOE SMITH

Yeah. I've been travelling for a while... and I've been alone.

PETER

Sex? That's easy... Why didn't you just say so.

Joe leans in, speaks in a hush.

JOE SMITH

The thing is... and please, I don't want this to get around.

Peter nods his head as if to say "my lips are sealed."

JOE SMITH (cont'd)

The stuff I go in for, it's a little...

Joe searches for the words.

JOE SMITH (cont'd)  
Let's just say it's not exactly  
what God had in mind. Is that  
going to be a problem?

PETER  
No.

Joe smiles excitedly.

JOE SMITH  
I knew there was something about  
you. As soon as I saw you I said  
to myself, that's a guy who  
understands.

PETER  
You have no idea.

Joe laughs and hits the table with his hand. Another BEAT.

PETER (cont'd)  
So what's it going to be?

JOE SMITH  
(smiles)  
Your sister.

Peter's smile drops.

PETER  
(confused)  
Penny?

JOE SMITH  
That freaky bitch has been in my  
head since I saw her at the will  
reading.

Peter's stunned.

JOE SMITH (cont'd)  
Tell you what, first I'll get the  
suite, just like we said. Give me  
a few hours to sleep and take a  
shower, then send her over around  
eight.

Peter looks away.

JOE SMITH (cont'd)  
We got a deal, don't we Pete?

Peter thinks for a LONG BEAT, then

PETER  
I'll see what I can do.

Slowly he gets to his feet. CLOSE ON PETER as he starts slowly away from the table. Finally, from behind, he hears Joe laughing.

JOE SMITH  
That's the problem with people, huh  
Pete.

Peter turns to face him.

JOE SMITH (cont'd)  
They forget that family comes  
first.

Peter's realizing that he's been fucked with, big time.

JOE SMITH (cont'd)  
Chew on this, kid. The bank hated  
your old man. They wanted him dead  
even more than you did. And now,  
the only thing keeping them from  
cutting you and sis out  
completely... Is me.

Joe reaches for the sports section. Over in next aisle, sitting several booths away, he sees Michael.

JOE SMITH (cont'd)  
Don't forget, Pete... Sell it!

Peter stands in place, looking like he just got the wind knocked out of him.

PENNY (V.O.)  
Tell me you didn't...

INT. PETER'S CONDO, KITCHEN - CONTINUOUS

Peter leans back against the counter. He looks like a guy who just stepped in it, because he did.

PETER

I just wanted to talk to him... I  
thought I could get some idea of  
what he wanted --

In a flash Penny lunges for him, digging her nails into his  
cheek and ripping flesh. Peter screams.

PENNY

WHO SAID YOU COULD THINK?!

He holds his hand over his face, but blood still seeps  
through his fingers.

PETER

Why did you do that?!

PENNY

You'll blow everything I've worked  
for!

She makes another move toward him, but this time he grabs her  
arm before it can reach it's target. There's a brief  
struggle, then Peter manages to push her away.

Penny trips and falls hard on her ass. Peter immediately  
comes to her aid.

PETER

I'm sorry. Are you alright --

PENNY

GET AWAY FROM ME!

He takes a step back.

PETER

I'm sorry.

She glares at him, and he leaves the room.

CLOSE ON PENNY, fuming.

INT. RENO POLICE STATION - DAY

The doors fly open, and Roger enters. The guy even walks  
with authority. A second later the doors open again, and  
Reggie steps through. He walks with authority too, because  
he's copying Roger.

FOLLOW THEM as they navigate their way through the station.

NARRATOR (V.O.)

You couldn't tell by looking at him, but Roger was excited. He just got a break in the case, and all of Reno was buzzing.

Reggie jogs to catch up to Roger, and they both enter the Reno Police's interrogation room.

INT. POLICE DEPARTMENT, INTERROGATION ROOM - CONTINUOUS

The heavy door swings open to reveal Destiny, sitting behind a wooden table, looking up at Roger and Reggie behind mascara-smearred, bloodshot eyes.

Roger sits down across from her. Reggie stands nearby, arms folded, trying to look official.

Roger just stares at Destiny for a long, intimidating BEAT. At the end of it, her eyes well up with tears, and she starts to cry.

NARRATOR (V.O.)

As it turns out, Destiny had another boyfriend besides my father.

INT. HOTEL SUITE - FLASHBACK

Destiny and Rod are dancing their crack-induced jig. The Two Men are watching and laughing from the same place we saw them before. White Guy continues to watch as Destiny and Rod fall into a sloppy kiss.

NARRATOR (V.O.)

Did I say boyfriend? Actually, it was husband. But when you dance and fuck for money and crack, why let a little thing like marriage get in your way.

CLOSE ON White Guy/husband's eyes. His laughter fades, replaced by a rage that boils just below the surface.

INT. POLICE DEPARTMENT, INTERROGATION ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Roger and Reggie are in the same place, waiting patiently, as Destiny continues to cry.

DESTINY  
I didn't kill him... I swear.

Roger continues to watch, unmoved.

DESTINY (cont'd)  
You don't believe me, do you?

Roger doesn't answer. Reggie does.

REGGIE  
In a word, no.

Destiny and Roger both look to Reggie as if to say "who asked you." Destiny looks back to Roger.

ROGER  
Tell me about the airport.

EXT. AIRPORT - FLASHBACK

Morning. A new Lincoln Navigator with big chrome rims pulls up the curb and stops.

Destiny gets out of the passenger side wearing skin-tight jeans, a skin-tight t-shirt, and big, blue sunglasses. Her Husband gets out of the drivers side.

He moves to the back, lifts the rear door, and starts to pull suitcases out of the truck.

INT. AIRPORT - CONTINUOUS

Destiny and Husband enter carrying suitcases in both hands and knapsacks over their shoulders. Whatever's inside the luggage is heavy, and Destiny is struggling under the weight of it.

She has to stop and rest every few steps, causing her husband a large degree of irritation.

HUSBAND  
Come on!

DESTINY  
It's heavy!

He comes back a few steps to take a shoulder bag from around her neck. After slipping the bag over his own neck, they start to walk again.

INT. AIRPORT, METAL DETECTOR - CONTINUOUS

Large, like a closet. As the sweaty couple approach they do their best to look inconspicuous. Good luck.

Husband's first. He sets each of the bags on the conveyor belt and steps through the machine.

CLOSE ON HUSBAND. Nerves red-line as he waits for the bags to re-appear. A BLACK CHECKER, female, thirties, notices his state and gets curious, but the bags ride into the light without so much as a burp from the machine.

Now it's Destiny's turn. She hesitates a BEAT as she looks across at Husband, his eyes screaming at her to proceed. She places the heavy bags on the belt, and one by one they disappear into the mouth of the machine. Husband waits and watches, looking slightly more excited as each piece reaches the safety of the other side. Destiny's starting to feel it too, and she smiles.

Then she hears the sound.

Like the buzzing of a pager only louder. She takes a quick glance around trying to locate the source. A second later she realizes it's the machine, screaming for all the world to hear.

Destiny's in a haze. Images slow, as if underwater. She sees the Checker stop the machine. Sees her reach for the bag. She looks across to her husband, sees fear and self-preservation start to take over.

He grabs two suitcases and starts to run as Destiny stands in her frozen haze. The Checker's now yelling into a radio that seemed to appear out of nowhere. Destiny's eyes follow her husband, sprinting away from her into the belly of the airport.

Through bodies she sees a policeman run up. Her husband sees him too, and he swings a suitcase. The uniform goes down. As panic envelopes the scene, Husband reaches for the policeman's gun. He turns and lifts the weapon out in front of him.

Destiny thinks she hears a sound. A Pop. She thinks. Then her eyes confirm her worst fear as Husband's chest explodes in a burst of red.

DESTINY (V.O.)

He ran away...

CLOSE ON HUSBAND. On dead eyes. Bright red blood spreads around him, framing his head like a portrait. FREEZE FRAME.

DESTINY (V.O.) (cont'd)  
He just left me there.

ROGER (V.O.)  
Like you left Rod?

INT. POLICE DEPARTMENT, INTERROGATION ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Destiny stares at Roger across the table without responding.

NARRATOR (V.O.)  
Rule number one. If you're going  
to hide money in the desert...

EXT. DESERT - NIGHT (FLASHBACK)

Rod is standing next to Destiny. They're watching something happen in front of them.

REVERSE to show Husband, standing in a waist-deep pit, shoveling sand and dirt out of the bottom of it. He turns toward CAMERA and we FREEZE FRAME.

NARRATOR (V.O.)  
... Do it yourself.

INT. AIRPORT, SECURITY ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Police and security line up metal strong-boxes across the top of a long table.

NARRATOR (V.O.)  
Rule number two. If you're going  
to steal money...

One by one a Cop opens the boxes, revealing small stacks of silver bars packed within each.

NARRATOR (cont'd)  
... Check the boxes.

The Cop gets to the last box. He flips open the lid to reveal not silver bars, but a large-caliber handgun. We HEAR the same pager-like buzzing sound as before.

NARRATOR (V.O.) (cont'd)  
Thoroughly.

INT. AIRPORT, METAL DETECTOR - CONTINUOUS

The machine screams like an animal, angrily awoken out of its slumber.

Destiny stands next to it, looking like stunned prey.

INT. POLICE DEPARTMENT - PRESENT TIME

Roger and Reggie step out of the interrogation room and a POLICEWOMEN enters in their place. She starts over toward Destiny as the interrogation room door swings shut.

CLOSE ON ROGER, walking. The look on his face tells something's not quite right.

NARRATOR (V.O.)

Destiny took the money, Roger knew that. But she didn't kill Rod. Neither did her husband.

He enters his office. Reggie enters a second later, closing the door behind them.

NARRATOR (V.O.) (cont'd)

He didn't know that for sure, but he suspected it.

INT. JOE'S HOTEL SUITE - NIGHT

LOOKING OUT, over the balcony to the strip. The lights are off, and the room is dark. All we see is Joe's silhouette, lifting a drink to his lips.

NARRATOR (V.O.)

Roger had other people in mind for the killer.

END OF ACT TWO

ACT THREE

INT. RENO BANK AND TRUST - MORNING

Joe is waiting in the lobby. He's got his black suit on. We don't know if he's got one black suit, or many. All we know is he always wears a black suit.

A YOUNG WOMAN approaches. She works for the bank.

YOUNG WOMAN

Mr. Ingerhoff can see you now.

Joe gets up and follows the Young Woman into Fred Ingerhoff's office.

INT. FRED INGERHOFF'S OFFICE - CONTINUOUS

Joe enters. Fred smiles, stands, and holds his hand out to shake. FREEZE FRAME.

NARRATOR (V.O.)

Fred Ingerhoff is a man who shouldn't be trusted. Not by Joe, necessarily. I'm talking in general... Alright, I'm only talking for myself.

LIVE ACTION to show Joe take Fred's hand and shake it.

FRED INGERHOFF

Thanks for coming in.

Joe nods.

FRED INGERHOFF (cont'd)

Sorry you had to wait.

FREEZE FRAME.

NARRATOR (V.O.)

The truth is, it's not Fred I have a problem with. It's anybody that handles money for a living. Other people's money. I don't think you can do it, day in and day out, without it messing with you. It has to make you think about things. That's just human nature, right?

LIVE ACTION.

FRED INGERHOFF  
Please, have a seat.

Joe does.

FRED INGERHOFF (cont'd)  
Can I get you something?

JOE SMITH  
I'm alright.

A BEAT.

FRED INGERHOFF  
I guess you heard about the arrest?

JOE SMITH  
I heard.

FRED INGERHOFF  
From what I read in the newspaper,  
it seems pretty cut and dry.

JOE SMITH  
Nothing's ever cut and dry -- So  
what was it you wanted to see me  
about?

FRED INGERHOFF  
Nothing specific, Joe.  
(smiles)  
We've always enjoyed a good  
relationship with the Buckley's,  
and we have, as you know, a  
financial interest in the casino,  
so we just wanted to sit down and  
get to know you a little and find  
out what your plans were in terms  
of involvement.

JOE SMITH  
Did you do that all in one breath?

Fred smiles again, although he's not sure how to take that.

JOE SMITH (cont'd)  
I can't talk for that long without  
taking a breath.

FRED INGERHOFF

Well I get a lot of practice.

(beat)

We don't much about you, Joe. The truth is... we don't know anything about you at all.

JOE SMITH

Whose "we"?

FRED INGERHOFF

The bank.

JOE SMITH

Banks have ways of finding things out.

FRED INGERHOFF

Yes, we do... And those ways turned out to be very unfruitful.

JOE SMITH

You found something. And whatever you found was on the up and up, right?

FRED INGERHOFF

There was nothing illegal, if that's what you mean.

JOE SMITH

That's what I mean.

Joe glares at Fred. Money guys don't like to get glared at, especially when they think they're the only ones who should be doing the glaring.

FRED INGERHOFF

My job is to protect the bank's interests. And you control a portion, however small, of the property we own forty nine and one half percent of --

JOE SMITH

And you want fifty and a half?

FRED INGERHOFF

We want the casino and hotel to return to profitability. Mr. Buckley had a different philosophy than ours, and his philosophy turned out to be crap.

FRED INGERHOFF (cont'd)  
Now we want an opportunity to run  
the business in a more efficient  
manner.

JOE SMITH  
Well that's why I'm here.

BEAT.

FRED INGERHOFF  
Excuse us if we don't see it that  
way.

Another BEAT as Fred smiles the kind of smile you just want  
to slap off somebody's face.

JOE SMITH  
You know what I hate, Fred? I hate  
guys who keep saying "we" when  
they're the only one in the room.  
And I hate banks who forget that  
all they are is a place to put your  
money. Let me guess, you get my  
share of the Lucky Rabbit, "however  
small" that is, then turn around  
and appoint yourself director.  
Well fuck you, Fred, you didn't do  
anything. Guys like you play it  
safe. You won't gamble unless it's  
with other people's dough... So we  
both know what's what. We both  
know that I'm the only thing  
keeping those sibling sociopaths  
from having the controlling  
interest in the Rabbit, and if they  
got that... it's goodbye, Fred.

Joe stands. He's not mad. He's not even a little-worked up.  
We get the feeling that chewing out guys like Fred just makes  
Joe hungry for lunch.

JOE SMITH (cont'd)  
Don't ever make me wait again.

And Joe exits.

HOLD ON Fred's pissed-off but put-down face.

INT. LUCKY RABBIT, MAIN ROOM - MORNING

Facing the casino's big front doors. The darkness of the  
room makes the outside so bright it hurts your eyes.

MOVING toward the bright until we're almost outside. When we're just inside the entrance, Joe Smith steps into view and walks past CAMERA.

NARRATOR (V.O.)

Things in the casino hadn't changed much since Joe arrived in town.

REVERSE to follow him. Pull back slowly to show another MAN in a suit trailing just behind. CAMERA CONTINUES TO FALL BACK, exposing more men, all following Joe like a squadron of fighter planes in formation.

NARRATOR (V.O.) (cont'd)

Oh, the pot had been stirred in the town. But not inside the casino.

INT. LUCKY RABBIT, TONY'S OFFICE - CONTINUOUS

Tony is behind his desk, talking animatedly on the phone. A guy without a care in the world.

NARRATOR (V.O.)

Not until today.

The door to the office opens and Joe steps in. Tony can't believe it.

TONY

(into phone)

I'll call you back.

He hangs up. Joe looks around the office. In the corner are several cardboard, file-type boxes stacked one on top of the other. He goes over to them.

TONY (cont'd)

What the hell do you think you're doing?

JOE SMITH

Assuming my dominant place in the universe. You see, Tony... today is your day of reckoning.

NARRATOR (V.O.)

Okay, Joe could get a little melodramatic. But only when he got excited.

Joe grabs the top box, empties the contents on the floor.

Tony, furious, steps quickly around his desk and lunges at Joe. He throws a big right-hand, a real haymaker, that Joe sidesteps in one quick, practiced motion. Grabbing him by the back of the head, Joe gives shoves his face into the wall.

Tony bounces off the wall and drops to his knees, dazed. Joe drops the cardboard box on his lap.

JOE SMITH

Fill it with anything you want to keep.

Tony, getting his wits back, screams.

TONY

TIFFANY... CALL SECURITY.

JOE SMITH

Maybe she didn't hear you.

Joe walks to the door, opens it, and yells into the outer office.

JOE SMITH (cont'd)

Security!

A BEAT, and the Gray-Haired Man from the Mercedes and the IHOP enters. He's smiling.

JOE'S GUY

Is there a problem?

JOE SMITH

The guy sitting on his fat ass is a disgruntled ex-employee. Escort him off the premises, and tell the staff not to let him back in the building.

Gray-Haired Man is still smiling.

JOE'S GUY

I can do that.

TONY'S POV, LOOKING UP AT JOE AND THE MAN.

JOE SMITH

Careful with his hands... He's a bowler.

The Gray-Haired Man picks up the cardboard box and shoves it down hard over Tony's head as the SCREEN GOES BLACK.

INT. POLICE STATION - DAY

FADE IN as Reggie walks past CAMERA carrying two Venti-sized cups of coffee from Starbucks.

He's got a slight smile on his face, like he's got something good to share. FOLLOW him through the station and into Roger's office.

INT. POLICE STATION, ROGER'S OFFICE - CONTINUOUS

Roger's there, reading the paper, as Reggie enters. Reggie sets one cup down on the desk in front of Roger.

ROGER  
Bring the Sweet and Low?

Reggie's face tells us he forgot.

REGGIE  
Damn.

Roger looks out the office window, sees Crime Tech watching from outside.

ROGER  
(to Crime Tech/loud)  
Five bucks.

Roger holds up five fingers as Crime Tech shakes his head and walks off.

REGGIE  
(disappointed)  
You bet on me?

ROGER  
I bet against you.

REGGIE  
I'm your partner, man. Why would  
you do that?

Roger takes a sip from his coffee, ignoring Reggie's question.

REGGIE (cont'd)  
(surly)  
Get your own coffee from now on.

Reggie pouts. He grabs a section of the paper and sits as Roger grins.

ROGER  
Check the faxes?

REGGIE  
Yes, I checked the god-damned faxes, and there's nothing from secret agent man.

Reggie watches Roger a BEAT. The guy's an island.

REGGIE (cont'd)  
So who's your guy?

ROGER  
What guy?

REGGIE  
I know you got a guy somewhere.  
What is he, FBI... Department of Justice...

Roger stays quiet. He picks up a different section of the paper as Reggie's frustration grows.

REGGIE (cont'd)  
... The Justice League? Is it the Green Lantern, is that who your contact is?

ROGER  
Do me a favor. Go check the faxes again.

Reggie frowns as we FREEZE FRAME.

NARRATOR (V.O.)  
Roger did have a contact. All good cops do.

INT. ROGERS OFFICE - FLASHBACK

Roger's behind his desk. He's got the phone to his ear and he's dialing numbers. We HEAR the FEMALE OPERATOR'S voice on the other end.

OPERATOR  
FBI.

ROGER  
Jeff Braddel please.

OPERATOR  
Who's calling?

ROGER  
Roger Mayweather.

OPERATOR  
One moment please.

Musac comes on the line as Roger waits.

NARRATOR (V.O.)  
Roger had a lot of questions for Joe Smith, but he needed to find out a little bit about him first. And when you want to find out about people, you go to the people who find out things about people for a living.

Another voice comes on the line. A Man's voice.

BRADDEL  
You been getting out?

ROGER  
I played eighteen last weekend.

BRADDEL  
How'd you shoot?

ROGER  
I finished.

We hear friendly laughter on the other end.

ROGER (cont'd)  
I need a favor, Jeff.

BRADDEL  
Sure.

ROGER  
I need you to run a check on a Joseph Smith.

BRADDEL  
Is that a joke?

ROGER

Nope.

FREEZE FRAME on Roger's smile.

NARRATOR (V.O.)

The F.B.I. If there's dirt to be dug up, these are the guys to do it. They should change their name to the FBDD... The Federal Bureau of Dirt Diggers.

LIVE ACTION.

BRADDEL

When do you need it?

ROGER

As soon as possible.

BRADDEL

You got it... I've been hitting the ball clean.

ROGER

You couldn't hit the ball clean in the shower.

More friendly laughter.

INT. POLICE STATION, ROGER'S OFFICE - PRESENT TIME

Roger's made his way through another section as Reggie returns.

REGGIE

Smith just took over the casino.

Roger looks up, wondering if he heard him right.

REGGIE (cont'd)

Just walked in with a bunch of guys and fired everybody.

Roger's surprised. And it's hard to surprise Roger.

ROGER

Everybody?

INT. LUCKY RABBIT - FLASHBACK

CAMERA MOVES through the main room. We SEE the pit boss with the bad toupee being told to leave. He's replaced by one of Joe's men in suits.

SECURITY PERSONNEL are now guys who could actually keep something secured.

INT. LUCKY RABBIT/HOTEL, KITCHEN - CONTINUOUS

Even the KITCHEN STAFF is being pink-slipped, replaced by workers with clean uniforms and even cleaner consciences.

INT. LUCKY RABBIT, BAR - CONTINUOUS

Those old Cocktail Waitresses are now old news, replaced by young, attractive women.

INT. LUCKY RABBIT, TABLES - CONTINUOUS

Neatly dressed dealers and croupier's take their places behind the gaming tables.

In the background, an army of cleaning crews can be seen giving the place the once over.

INT. ROGERS OFFICE - PRESENT TIME

Roger still has that surprised look on his face as he waits for Reggie's answer.

REGGIE  
... Everybody.

INT. LUCKY RABBIT, MAIN ROOM - FLASHBACK

To show Joe Smith walk out to the center of the room and stop. Looking proudly over his territory like a Lion on the Serengeti, Joe looks pleased. Very pleased.

Gray-Haired guy walks up, stands beside him. He looks over at Joe, waiting for his cue.

JOE SMITH  
(to Gray-Haired Guy)  
Open the doors.

Gray-Haired Guy smiles and walks PAST CAMERA and OUT OF FRAME.

NARRATOR (V.O.)  
And that's how Joe Smith took over  
the Lucky Rabbit.

END OF ACT THREE

ACT FOUR

INT. RENO BANK AND TRUST, FRED'S OFFICE - MORNING

Fred is talking to CAMERA.

FRED INGERHOFF

You can't win this alone. To even try would be foolish. What we need to do is work together, because if we don't, we'll both lose.

Fred waits for a response. None comes.

FRED INGERHOFF (cont'd)

That's a fact, people.

REVERSE to show Peter and Penny. She looks unhappy. He has a large bandage covering his entire left cheek.

PENNY

What are you asking us to do exactly?

FRED INGERHOFF

Combine our assets, let the bank appoint a director of the casino, and then force Smith out.

PETER

Who would the bank appoint?

FRED INGERHOFF

We haven't made that determination.

PENNY

When would you make that determination?

FRED INGERHOFF

As soon as the opportunity presents itself.

A BEAT. Peter leans in to whisper to Penny.

PETER

(whispering)

This guy's full of shit.

Penny doesn't whisper.

PENNY  
 (to Peter)  
 Shut up.  
 (to Fred))  
 We'll accept your deal.

Fred smiles. FREEZE FRAME.

NARRATOR (V.O.)  
 I know what she just said. It's  
 the thing to do, really. Joe Smith  
 is set up in the casino like he  
 owns the place... Well, like he  
 owns a lot more than one percent of  
 it.

REVERSE to show PENNY, still in FREEZE FRAME. She's smiling.

NARRATOR (V.O.) (cont'd)  
 The thing is, if Penny Buckley  
 politely agrees to anything that is  
 good for somebody else... you  
 better believe she still has some  
 angle left to play.

LIVE ACTION.

FRED INGERHOFF  
 I'm glad to hear you say that. I  
 believe it's the only way to handle  
 this situation.

Peter looks at Penny, like he's waiting for the other shoe to  
 drop. Hey, he knows his sister too.

FRED INGERHOFF (cont'd)  
 We had a long relationship with  
 your father, and I was sorry to see  
 it deteriorate. But we have a  
 chance here for a new start, and I  
 can tell you we all feel good about  
 what came out of this meeting.

PENNY  
 (smiling)  
 So do we.

Fred stands.

FRED INGERHOFF  
 I'll have some paperwork drawn up,  
 and send it out to you by the end  
 of the day.

Peter's still watching Penny. He notices she isn't standing.

PENNY

I just remembered one teeny tiny  
little point I should mention  
before we go.

Fred's all ears. So's Peter.

PENNY (cont'd)

I have to be appointed permanent  
director.

Fred chuckles, like you would at an absurdity.

FRED INGERHOFF

That's not possible.

PENNY

Then there's no deal.

Fred's jaw just started to clench.

FRED INGERHOFF

Did you hear anything I just said?

PENNY

I heard everything you just said.

FRED INGERHOFF

Then don't be stupid.

PETER

Hey!

Peter and Penny start for the exit.

PENNY

Thanks for the offer, Fred, but  
we'll take our chances with Smith.

FRED INGERHOFF

You two... You're just like your  
father.

Now THAT is cold. Peter steps toward Fred, but Penny grabs his arm. Peter reaches for cup on Fred's desk, filled with pens and pencils. Fred reaches too. He gets the cup, Peter gets the pens and pencils.

Peter hauls back to throw them at Fred. FREEZE FRAME.

NARRATOR (V.O.)

No, this I gotta see.

LIVE ACTION as Peter throws. Fred gets hit, many times. It looks like it hurts.

Fred and Peter begin yelling at each other. Penny just lets 'em.

NARRATOR (V.O.) (cont'd)

One thing I do know. These three could never be friends.

A couple of MALE BANK EMPLOYEES come in to see what all the yelling is about. Peter turns and shoves one of them. He shoves back. Now everybody's yelling at everybody.

NARRATOR (V.O.) (cont'd)

And things were looking better and better for Mr. Joe Smith.

INT. BAR - NIGHT

Joe is sitting at the bar, quietly sipping a drink.

NARRATOR (V.O.)

And he knew it.

He downs the rest of the drink and smiles. He smiles over the bar at a BLONDE WOMAN sitting across from him. She smiles back.

As he's thinking about heading over, he hears a quiet voice behind him.

WOMAN

Sonny?

CLOSE ON JOE, wondering if his ears are playing tricks on him.

WOMAN (cont'd)

That is you, isn't it?

Slowly he turns to face the voice. There's a WOMAN standing behind him. Brunette, late forties, she was once a real looker. In the right light, she still is.

And Joe is actually speechless.

WOMAN (cont'd)

Aren't you going to say hello?

The Woman smiles. Joe's still getting over the surprise.  
FREEZE FRAME on him.

NARRATOR (V.O.)

Joe had a past. Everybody does.  
He knew people were going to wonder  
about him. About the name. He  
expected it. And he expected a lot  
of people to spend a lot of time  
trying to find out who the hell Joe  
Smith really was.

LIVE ACTION.

JOE SMITH

Hello, Ruth.

Show Ruth. She looks tired, like someone at the end of a  
long journey. But the dark circles around her eyes frame  
something else too. Love? FREEZE FRAME.

NARRATOR (V.O.)

What Joe Smith didn't expect was  
that his past would find him first.

Live action as Ruth starts to laugh. Joe does too.

WOMAN/RUTH

Can I at least get a hug?

She moves into him, hugging him warmly.

RUTH

I'm still your wife, you know?

JOE SMITH

How could I forget?

She laughs again.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. BAR - LATER

Joe and Ruth have moved to a booth. There are fresh drinks  
in front of him, and they sit together in an easy, familiar  
comfort.

JOE SMITH

How long has it been?

She thinks.

RUTH

Let me see... Well, I know it was  
at least before the thing --

Joe raises an eyebrow.

RUTH (cont'd)

Sorry.

She catches herself. Whatever the "thing" is, it will stay  
unmentioned. At least by her.

RUTH (cont'd)

Eight years or so... You still had  
that moustache.

JOE SMITH

(embarrassed)

Forgot about that.

They laugh about the moustache. A BEAT.

RUTH

Do I get to see the Rabbit?

JOE SMITH

Of course.

RUTH

But I should pretend... right?

JOE SMITH

I could never tell you what to do  
before, why should things be  
different now.

She smiles. Then her face gets more serious.

RUTH

I could really mess things up for  
you, you know... And you would  
deserve it.

Joe nods.

JOE SMITH

I know.

He looks at her, wide open. His eyes say he hopes she won't.

RUTH

(beat)

You've got a good thing going here,  
Sonny --

(remembering)

Joe...

(beat)

Don't screw up this time.

JOE SMITH

(beat)

Thanks.

Another BEAT. He downs the rest of his drink, she takes another sip and pushes the rest away.

JOE SMITH (cont'd)

How long are you in town?

RUTH

I don't know. Maybe a while.

JOE SMITH

If you need anything.

She waves him off.

JOE SMITH (cont'd)

I mean it.

Ruth slips out of the booth. Joe doesn't. She stops.

JOE SMITH (cont'd)

You mind if we don't walk out  
together?

RUTH

It's one time I'll understand.

She picks up her purse, turns to look at him one more time.

RUTH (cont'd)

(playfully)

I'd come and be a cocktail waitress  
for you, but I think these legs  
look a little scary for the outfit.

He looks down at her legs.

JOE SMITH

Not from here they don't.

Ruth rolls her eyes

RUTH  
See you around, "Joe".

And she exits. He watches her go. And he keeps watching, long after she's gone.

INT. POLICE STATION, ROGER'S OFFICE - MORNING

Roger is reading the paper. He reads the paper a lot.

Reggie enters, looking smug. He waits for Roger to look up from his reading. Then, smiling, he pulls out a several pages of fax paper and waves them in the air.

Roger puts his paper down.

EXT. LUCKY RABBIT - CONTINUOUS

Facing street. Roger and Reggie jaywalk across the boulevard. Reggie is watching for cars. Roger is apparently wearing that new suit of invulnerability.

INT. LUCKY RABBIT - CONTINUOUS

Roger and Reggie step inside. Then Roger stops.

ROGER  
I need a few minutes, Reggie.

Reggie stares back, surprised and disappointed. Then Reggie dials his insult back.

REGGIE  
Alright. But only because you finally called me by first name.

Roger almost smiles, then proceeds further into the casino. Reggie puts his hands in his pocket and saunters away.

INT. LUCKY RABBIT, MAIN FLOOR - CONTINUOUS

Roger is standing in the middle of the room. He glances up at the ceiling, at the eye in the sky. He's waiting.

Joe Smith walks up behind him.

JOE SMITH  
Do you want to talk in the office?

ROGER  
I like it out here.

Roger is watching the Blackjack table. Joe notices.

JOE SMITH  
You want some chips... On the house.

ROGER  
(smiles)  
Gave it up.

JOE SMITH  
You never really give it up.

ROGER  
I did.

JOE SMITH  
That's right... You save your betting for the golf course?

Roger looks at him. He knows Joe Smith is not to be underestimated.

They start walking.

JOE SMITH (cont'd)  
So what do you think?

ROGER  
It's an improvement.

JOE SMITH  
It's clean, the food is better, we're redoing the rooms... This is going to be a place people like to come in to.

Roger didn't come for a tour.

They stop walking, then just stare at each other a BEAT. Two old veterans, skilled at the game.

JOE SMITH (cont'd)  
You did some checking around.

Roger shrugs. A BEAT as he waits for Joe to continue.

JOE SMITH (cont'd)  
I'm sorry you didn't find more of what you were looking for.

ROGER

Where were you the night of the murder?

INT. BAR, OUTSIDE OF RENO - NIGHT

The no-frills kind. The patrons are nothing but locals and drunks.

And there, sitting alone at the end of the bar, is Joe Smith.

JOE SMITH

I stopped in a little bar outside of town. I had drink. I liked it so much I had another one.

INT. LUCKY RABBIT, MAIN FLOOR - CONTINUOUS

Joe and Roger haven't moved.

JOE SMITH

... According to the papers, you already have a suspect.

ROGER

According to people I know, Joe Smith is two years old... He got a social security number in Philadelphia, a checking account in Colorado, and a driver's license in Reno.

JOE SMITH

I failed that test twice.

ROGER

Sounds like witness protection.

JOE SMITH

Sounds like you better do some more checking.

ROGER

(beat)

I don't suppose you want to just tell me who you really are?

JOE SMITH

What's the fun in that?

A slot machine goes crazy behind them. They both look at the sweet little old lady who won.

ROGER  
I'll see you around.

The conversation's over. For now.

JOE SMITH  
Next time you're in, try the  
brunch... And bring Reggie.

Joe smiles and disappears into the crowd. Roger turns and heads out. He walks past a familiar face. Michael's.

NARRATOR (V.O.)  
I started hanging around, trying to  
keep an eye on things... I didn't  
know what I was hoping to see.

Michael turns around. There, staring back at him from about ten feet away, is Joe.

INT. HOTEL, HALLWAY - NIGHT

(From the first scene). Michael pushes open the door of the suite. The room is dark. He steps in, closes the door.

Someone is standing out on the balcony, their back to the door. Michael walks over.

NARRATOR (V.O.)  
I finally decided to go and see  
him. It just seemed like the time  
to do it.

EXT. HOTEL BALCONY - CONTINUOUS

Michael steps out. The Man on the balcony turns to face him. It's Joe.

NARRATOR (V.O.)  
I expected him to treat me like he  
did everybody else. Like I was  
just another person trying to  
figure out the mystery... But he  
didn't.

Joe and Michael are talking, but we can't make out what they're saying.

NARRATOR (V.O.) (cont'd)  
He knew who I was. Knew all about  
me. That's the thing about Joe.  
He always knows.

INT. IHOP - MORNING

Joe Smith is sitting in his usual table. Michael walks to the booth and sits. Joe picks up his menu, hands it over.

NARRATOR (V.O.)  
He knew about my mother... And  
about how my father had treated us.

INT. HOUSE, BEDROOM - FLASHBACK

The year is 1984. We see a younger Rod Buckley. He's enraged, pulling women's clothes out of a closet and throwing them onto the floor.

A WOMAN is watching. And fighting. And screaming at the top of her lungs. Rod picks up a bundle of her clothes and starts walking.

INT. HOUSE, LIVING ROOM - CONTINUOUS

WATCHING Rod carrying the bundle down the hallway. He turns toward the front door, revealing the ten year old Michael following behind him. Michael is crying.

NARRATOR (V.O.)  
No doubt about it... My father  
wanted us gone.

EXT. HOUSE, STREET - CONTINUOUS

To show Rod walk the bundle of clothes all the way to the street, then throw them as far as he can.

Michael's Mother is outside now too. She and Rod pick the fight up where they left off. We SEE Michael watching from the porch.

NARRATOR (V.O.)  
I understood it. We had to go,  
because Peter and Penny and their  
mother were moving in.

CLOSE ON Michael. He's stopped crying now.

NARRATOR (V.O.) (cont'd)  
I never had a single good thought  
about my father again.

INT. LUCKY RABBIT - PRESENT TIME

Joe is talking to a Pit Boss. We SEE Michael, now in a  
suit, standing nearby.

NARRATOR (V.O.)  
Joe said he only wanted one thing.  
To turn the Lucky Rabbit into a  
real casino.

Joe comes over to explain something to Michael.

NARRATOR (V.O.) (cont'd)  
And he asked me come and work for  
him. Said he'd teach me things.  
Things my father never could.

Joe smiles, slaps Michael on the back.

INT. PETER'S CONDO - NIGHT

Peter lies alone in bed. He's naked and asleep. Penny steps  
out of the bathroom, wearing a robe.

NARRATOR (V.O.)  
Besides, where else was I going to  
go.

Penny lies down next to Peter. He's still wearing a bandage  
on his cheek. Carefully she pulls it off to reveal the scars  
beneath.

Tenderly, she begins to touch his face and hair. Peter's  
eyes open.

PETER  
(quietly)  
I want to kill him.

PENNY  
(softly)  
Shhhh... Go back to sleep.

CLOSE ON Penny as she comforts Peter. Not a bad idea,  
killing Joe Smith.

INT. LUCKY RABBIT - DAY

WIDE, to show the whole casino floor. Busy now. Tables full, slots packed. The way a casino is supposed to be.

NARRATOR (V.O.)

I don't know if Joe Smith killed my father or not.

CAMERA BEGINS TO MOVE FORWARD.

NARRATOR (V.O.) (cont'd)

I'm not sure I care. Just as long as Peter and Penny don't win.

CAMERA CONTINUES MOVING, straight toward a single craps table.

NARRATOR (V.O.) (cont'd)

They still had Destiny in custody. At least for the robbery

STILL MOVING. There's a MAN sitting at the craps table. We see his back.

NARRATOR (V.O.) (cont'd)

And if Roger wanted more suspects, all he had to do was look around, because there were lots of people who could have, and would have... beginning with Joe Smith.

CAMERA STOPS MOVING. We're CLOSE on the Man's back. The Man sitting at the craps table.

NARRATOR (V.O.) (cont'd)

But I hope it wasn't Joe... He was a fun guy to be around.

The Man at the table sticks his hand out. There's a cigarette in it. He taps the cigarette with his finger, knocking the ashes from it on the carpet below.

REVERSE TO SHOW the Man. It's Cigarette guy from the earlier scene. And standing behind him, in a black suit, is Joe.

JOE SMITH

How you doing?

Cigarette Guy turns to look.

CIGARETTE GUY

Ash man.

JOE SMITH

That's right.

(looks at carpet)

And I'm still seeing it.

CIGARETTE GUY

And I still don't give a shit.

Cigarette loses a hand, curses. Joe laughs.

JOE SMITH

I'm stupid, because I try to get inside, you know. Get inside the head of a guy who won't use an ashtray... What would make a guy want to burn holes in people's carpet, instead of using one?

CIGARETTE GUY

When you figure it out, let me know.

JOE SMITH

(laughing)

I don't know why it bothers me so much... It's just my problem I guess.

(beat)

Hey, you know what I want to do... I want to buy you a drink. What are you drinking?

CIGARETTE GUY

Scotch and soda.

JOE SMITH

(happily)

Alright.

Joe turns to a COCKTAIL WAITRESS. She's carrying a tray full of drinks.

JOE SMITH (cont'd)

Kimberly, you got a scotch and soda there?

She pulls it off the tray and hands it to him. Joe hands it to Cigarette Guy.

JOE SMITH (cont'd)  
Here you go.

The guy takes the drink, then sets it down on the table.

JOE SMITH (cont'd)  
No, no, no, I want you to drink it  
now.

CIGARETTE GUY  
I don't want it now.

JOE SMITH  
Well it's a gift. And when you  
give somebody a gift, you want to  
see them enjoy it... So enjoy it.

Cigarette Guy looks at Joe like he's a nuts. He takes a sip,  
then starts to set the glass down again.

JOE SMITH (cont'd)  
All of it.

Cigarette Guy drinks the rest of it.

JOE SMITH (cont'd)  
Good. I want you to enjoy that  
scotch and soda, because it's the  
last drink you're ever going to  
have in this casino.

CIGARETTE GUY  
(confused)  
What?

JOE SMITH  
(deadly serious)  
Now pick up your God-damned chips.

Cigarette Guy hesitates a split-second. Not a good idea.  
Joe Smith grabs him by the hair and yanks him off the seat.

We SEE Michael standing nearby as other people turn to watch.

JOE SMITH (cont'd)  
(to Michael)  
Grab his chips.

Michael picks them up. Joe Smith, still holding a handful of  
hair, holds the guys head so he can watch Michael.

JOE SMITH (cont'd)  
See there... That's all of 'em.

Joe starts to walk, pulling the Cigarette Guy by the hair toward the exit as Michael follows.

EXT. LUCKY RABBIT - CONTINUOUS

The doors open and Cigarette Guy comes flying. He hits the sidewalk and rolls a couple of times before he stops.

NARRATOR (V.O.)  
See what I mean. Fun to be around.

JOE SMITH  
(to Michael)  
Get his id, then put him on the list.

Joe Smith turns and disappears into the dark of the casino. Michael stays outside, looking down at the embarrassed Cigarette Guy.

NARRATOR (V.O.)  
I know what you're thinking. It's weird, me working for Joe. I mean, he's not the kind of guy who does things just to be nice, right?... So what's in it for him?

INT. BAR, OUTSIDE OF RENO - FLASHBACK

FROM BEHIND to show Joe, sitting at the bar that first night in town. The night of the murder.

NARRATOR (V.O.)  
Truth is, I don't know.

Then CAMERA moves slowly down to show Joe's shoes. Those black Italian loafers.

And they're covered with sand.

NARRATOR (V.O.) (cont'd)  
That's the other thing about him. When it comes to Joe Smith, you're never really sure about anything.

FADE TO BLACK

THE END