

BANG

Pilot: Where's Mrs. Goldberg?

by

Rick Diamond

BANG (PILOT: "Where's Mrs. Goldberg?")

FADE IN:

INT. RH NEGATIVE CAFE, NYC - NIGHT - A FEW YEARS BACK

At a table in the middle of the room, a woman, MRS. GOLDBERG, stares down at her phone. Her hair obscures her face. She's flanked by two guys. On one side, SAG GOLD, maybe 30, sips his drink and looks around sleepily at all the mesmerized fans staring straight ahead.

SAG (V.O.)

My friend Ralph...has a really big mouth.

Onstage RAMBLIN' RALPH LEFEBRE, early 30's, armed with ACOUSTIC GUITAR and racked HARMONICA, WAILS AWAY while the crowd goggles. It's a packed house: small tables, crammed in extra chairs, food, drink, and of course, this MUSIC -- urgent, save-the-world, folk singer anthems served up by the impossible love child of Bob Dylan and Bruce Springsteen stuffed into the body of young Abe Lincoln.

SAG (V.O.) (CONT'D)

Most people think Ralph has some kind of super human charisma...

Sag yawns.

SAG (V.O.) (CONT'D)

...but I don't see it. My friend, Farhad, however, is totally under Ralph's spell.

The other guy at the table with Mrs. Goldberg and Sag records the performance with a cell phone mounted on a mini tripod. FARHAD FARUSI, also 30-ish and looking like middle Elvis, hangs, slack mouthed, on every note, every word, every wild gyration.

SAG (V.O.) (CONT'D)

When Ralph's big mouth and his charisma find fertile gray matter to take root in, bad things can sprout. For instance: a chain reaction.

INT. FARHAD'S GRAMERCY PARK APARTMENT - NIGHT

The living room looks like an opium den. Dark, overstuffed, velvet couch, love seat and chair, lava lamps blubbing. Ramblin' Ralph stands, glass pipe in hand, and gestures like a mad conductor, accenting each word.

RALPH

Don't you see it, Farhad? You're
the guy in the prophesy!

Farhad, on the couch, stares blankly at Ralph.

Ralph lights the bowl at the end of the glass pipe and
breathes deeply.

Sag, sunken in the plush love seat, GIGGLES. He's stoned.

Mrs. Goldberg, asleep, shares the love seat with Sag. Her
face is covered by huge sunglasses. Her head rolls to the
side and her nose burrows into Sag's shoulder. Sag smiles.

SAG

Yeah, Farhad, you're the guy who
blows up the New City.

RALPH

Yeah, exactly! You have a blue 380zx
turbo, man. It's you he's talkin'
about.

FARHAD

You can read French?

RALPH

Yeah, of course, man, I'm Cajun.
Nostradamus said "turbine", not
"turban". It's always been translated
wrong.

SAG

(chuckling)

It all makes sense, now. The guy
with the blue turbo blows up New
York.

RALPH

(slaps his leg)

Exactly.

INT. NYU DORM ROOM - DAY

FOSTER DOUGLAS, 18, poster child nerd, pasty, disheveled,
dark rimmed glasses, sits on his bed. Farhad, picks up one
of Foster's STAR WARS figures and sits down next to him.

FARHAD

My friend Ralph says you can do it.
Can you?

Foster stares down at the floor, clearly uncomfortable with
Farhad sitting so close to him.

And then a smile takes over his face.

FOSTER

Yeah, I can do it...but you'll have to get me the fuel.

FARHAD

That won't be a problem.

FOSTER

(peeks at Farhad,
skeptical)

Really.

EXT. PARK AVENUE - NIGHT

A sky blue Nissan 380zx races through light traffic.

EXT. MANHATTAN SIDEWALK - NIGHT

Ralph, hoodie pulled up, cell phone to his ear, hurries on impossibly long legs, occasionally passes someone.

INT. NY BRANCH HOMELAND SECURITY BUNKER - NIGHT

A wall of two dozen large screen monitors. A row of desks facing the monitors. Men and women at the desks, most staring at the monitors. A young woman, short dark ponytail, picks up the receiver of her BUZZING land line phone.

YOUNG WOMAN

Homeland. What's the nature of the threat?

INTERCUT PHONE CONVERSATION - RALPH AND HOMELAND BUNKER

RALPH

There's a guy drivin' a pale blue Nissan 380zx up Park Avenue right now with a nuclear device onboard.

The woman types the information.

YOUNG WOMAN

And what is your name, sir?

RALPH

You've got maybe thirty minutes. He's headin' for the U.N.

Ralph continues on foot at a brisk pace, picking up speed as the conversation drags on...

YOUNG WOMAN

Sir, I need your name.

RALPH

My name? Well, cher, I'm Jesus Christ, ya savior, God damn it, if you'll just listen ta me. This is not a prank and I'm not crazy.

YOUNG WOMAN

I understand, Mr. Christ.

The guy to her right turns toward her and smiles.

RALPH

Oooh, snarky girl. Ya know that uranium that was stolen out of the Senate side of the Capitol a couple of weeks ago? It's in that car.

YOUNG WOMAN

It's five o'clock in the morning, sir. Go back to sleep.

(sighs)

Sir...there was no uranium stolen from the Capitol. Why would they have uranium?

Her SUPERVISOR, who's slipped in behind her to monitor the call, grabs the phone, startling her.

SUPERVISOR

I'm listening.

RALPH

He's gonna turn on 41st, then Tudor City, then ram somethin' near the U.N. It's triggered by compression. You're gonna have ta figure out a way ta stop him without him crashin'.

The man hands the receiver back to the young woman and pulls out his cell phone. He pushes a number then points at the screens.

SUPERVISOR

(to the room)

Light blue 380zx heading north on Park. Find him. Get a car next to him but don't let him crash. Everything we got to the entrance of the U.N.! Now!

SAG (V.O.)

Ralph never thought his big mouth would be the catalyst for a functional nuclear bomb. None of us did.

EXT. PARK AVENUE - MOMENTS LATER

A black SUV pulls alongside the ZX. A FEDERAL AGENT holding something that looks like a beach-type metal detector sticks it out the back window toward the speeding car next to him. A RAPID CLICKING joins the ENGINE and TIRE SOUNDS.

FEDERAL AGENT

Fuck me.

EXT. MANHATTAN SIDEWALK - MOMENTS LATER

RALPH

(in a full trot)

Are ya in Manhattan?

INT. NY BRANCH HOMELAND SECURITY BUNKER - CONTINUOUS

YOUNG WOMAN

I can't tell you that, sir.

INTERCUT PHONE CONVERSATION - RALPH AND YOUNG WOMAN

RALPH

If ya are, I hope you're not in Midtown.

YOUNG WOMAN

We're fifty feet down. You don't actually believe the thing will work, do you? You sound like an intelligent guy.

Ralph reaches the southernmost tip of Manhattan and looks out toward the Statue of Liberty.

RALPH

Good luck.

He tosses the phone into the water.

EXT. 41ST STREET - MOMENTS LATER

Near the end of 41st St. two fire trucks, SIRENS SCREAMING, race to a halt on opposite sides of the street. Firemen run hoses across the street and secure them creating a double "net".

Black SUVs line both sides of the street. Agents scramble behind the cars and draw their weapons as the Nissan speeds toward the gauntlet.

INT. 380ZX - CONTINUOUS

Farhad has a glazed look in his eyes.

FARHAD

Allahu akbar, Allahu akbar, al' umm,
al' umm!

GUN FIRE erupts from one side of the road as two sharpshooters target the speeding Nissan right before it hits the fire hoses, stretching them forward. One of them breaks free of where its secured, and then, as the car grinds to a halt and stalls out, the other hose SNAPS and flings its halves back to the sides of the street. SILENCE. Then a HAIL OF BULLETS SCREAM toward the tires. More SILENCE...

The car tries to START. AGAIN. AGAIN...and then...the engine ROARS and it lurches on flattened tires, turns, and thumps up Tudor City Place, and picking up speed, it rams a wall.

SILENCE. The doors of a lone SUV near the crash open and two agents step out, a man and a woman. They stare at the wrecked car then nervously begin to LAUGH. Slowly, their LAUGHTER rises, LOUDER and LOUDER.

SAG (V.O.)

But chain reactions, whether events...
or atoms, are hard to stop once they
start, and Ralph's big mouth can't
always fix up what Ralph's big mouth
fucks up. But there's always
tomorrow...right?

EXT. MANHATTAN SKYLINE - MOMENTS LATER

A blinding flash. A DEAFENING ROAR. A mushroom cloud.

EXT. ATLANTIC CITY HIGH-RISE HOTEL ROOF TOP - MORNING -
THREE YEARS LATER

A pale blue sky. A wooden fence. A bizarrely out of place manicured lawn containing several chaise longues and a round wooden table surrounded by several wooden chairs.

A TODDLER stumbles into view and points to the sky.

TODDLER

(excited)

Boon!

A small, colorful spot is visible on the perfect blue. The spot grows larger and more vivid as it approaches. It's a multi-colored, hot-air balloon.

INT. SAG'S HOTEL SUITE (BEDROOM) - DAY

A beautifully decorated room. Sag, now 33, is asleep on the bed. An eye opens. Sag squints, then repositions his head a bit and looks toward the foot of the bed.

Sitting cross-legged, staring at him is MELODY, late 20's, dark-hair, lovely in her black and white polka-dot bra and panties.

MELODY

Sag...you need to get going.

SAG

Did you open those curtains?

MELODY

(sarcastically)

Oh, yeah it was me.

SAG

Where's Mrs. Goldberg?

MELODY

Seriously. You need to focus, Sag. This might be the most important day of your life.

She hops off the bed and does her morning stretches.

MELODY (CONT'D)

Up and at 'em, boy. Mr. Sun says it's gotta be almost noon.

SAG

Did Mrs. Goldberg open the curtains?

MELODY

Well, you know it wasn't me, right? She probably did it just before she went down to the chapel and thanked Jesus you never married her.

SAG

What does that mean?

MELODY

You lost three million bucks in that game last night. She's still got her two million.

SAG

I lost three million dollars.

MELODY

Yeah, bright boy. Shoulda stuck to Liverpool Rummy.

SAG

Oh, my God, Melody, what am I gonna do?

Melody stops stretching, straightens, then steps closer and leans down right in Sag's face, close enough to kiss him. He smiles and closes his eyes...

MELODY

(whispering)

Well, first thing you need to do...is...

(yelling)

Wake up!

Sag's eyes explode open. He looks around the beautiful room. He's alone.

INT. BANG SALON (BACK ROOM) - DAY

In the prep area stylists and assistants are busy at various tasks: mixing, choosing from color swatches, eating, playing with phones and tablets. SHELLEY, maybe 20, hair bleached and spiked, blood red lipstick, is lost in her iPad.

SHELLEY

(to whoever might be listening)

This is so cool. He watched this a couple of times and now he's this dude...again. Have you guys seen this?

She looks up. Nobody seems to be paying attention, but then, RITA, a short girl, mid-20's, auburn, teased shag, looks up from her mixing.

RITA

We saw the real thing, right?

SHELLEY

Oh, yeah. I keep forgetting you knew him before the accident.

RITA

He used to do that phony fag thing every day. He never broke character when he was on the floor.

She stops stirring, looks down at the color and then checks the tubes she just used, then shrugs.

RITA (CONT'D)

He'd come into the back room at the old Bang and he'd be instantly back to his pig persona...then two minutes later he'd be standing behind the chair flitting like Tinker Bell...no offense, Brian.

A gaunt, pasty guy, BRIAN, 30, spiked hair, looks up from his take-out, smiles, and flips Rita a captured bird. He returns to his eating.

BRIAN
Last night in the bar? He kissed me.

RITA
What?

SHELLEY
No way, dude.

BRIAN
Yep. Right on the mouth.

He puckers at them, his eyes glow.

RITA
You're full of shit.

SHELLEY
For real?

Brian grins, gets up and dumps his trash in the trash can, and struts out of the room with a Mona Lisa smirk...and emerges into the...

SALON

...ultra chic, a dozen stations, most filled with stylists and patrons, where Farhad, now 33, cuts a woman's hair. His mannerisms and voice are a bit over-the-top affected.

FARHAD
(to his client)
No, reeealy, I don't remember any of that, but I have to believe you, right?

He LAUGHS and continues the cut.

FARHAD (CONT'D)
So, let's change the subject to something current. I do much better with current.
(giggles)
How long are you and your husband here for?

Before the woman can answer Farhad sees Sag approaching...

FARHAD (CONT'D)

(to the client)

Hold that thought, Margaret.

(to Sag)

Sag. Where's Mrs. Goldberg? We need to order more 7N and 7A. Rita's having to improvise.

SAG

I don't know where she is. I was gonna ask you. How long has she been gone?

FARHAD

She didn't come in. I've been here since eight-thirty. Can you order some color...quickly?

SAG

I'm not the manager, Farhad.

FARHAD

You might have to be, Sag, after what you did last night.

(to his client)

He lost three million dollars in a card game.

He flutters his comb like a bird flying away.

FARHAD (CONT'D)

Bye-bye three million dollars.

Sag clinches his jaw, then...

SAG

Why're you doing that gay thing?

(to the client)

He's not gay.

FARHAD

I think I am, Sag. I was watching some old YouTubes of me doing some hair cutting demonstrations and I was very gay.

SAG

It was just an act, Farhad. You're not gay.

He walks toward the back room prep area.

FARHAD

(loudly)

I'm pretty sure I am gay, Sag.

Brian, with his color-processed client, has returned to his station next to Farhad's and he now has an ear-to-ear grin as Sag enters the...

BACK ROOM

SAG

Anyone seen Mrs. Goldberg today?

They all shrug, clueless...and then he opens the back door that opens onto the...

EXT. SIDEWALK - DAY

...and sees ALBERT, hard to tell how old he is, homeless, apparently drunk, sitting propped up against the outside of the building.

SAG

Albert, have you seen Mrs. Goldberg, today?

Albert smiles and looks up toward the sky.

ALBERT

I don't think so, Mr. Gold. Have you tried the nursery?

SAG

Good thinkin', Albert. Those old brain synapses are still firin', huh? Need any cash?

He reaches into his pocket.

ALBERT

Do I need any cash? I'd be worried about your brain if I were you, Mr. Gold. Do I need any cash?

Sag hands Albert a twenty. Albert stares at it in his dirty hand.

ALBERT (CONT'D)

The word on the street is you dropped three million in a game last night. You sure you can spare this?

SAG

I don't know, Albert. I'm gonna check the nursery. Later, man.

He turns and pounds twice on the door that has automatically locked and someone inside pushes it open.

Albert looks again toward the sky.

ALBERT
 (singing)
 Up, up, and away...in my beautiful,
 my beautiful...

Sag steps through the door and it closes behind him.

EXT. KIMMEL CENTER - DAY

The sun lights up the beautiful glass exterior and...

INT. KIMMEL CENTER LOBBY - DAY

...bathes the interior, a beautiful, open space.

Ramblin' Ralph LeFebre, now 35, sits on a couch, his eyes closed, his face slack and expressionless. His impossibly long arms and fingers are slack and hang at his sides. He might be asleep.

Two teen-aged boys approach him and stand over him. Ralph opens one eye and frowns.

RALPH
 You're blockin' the sun, garsons.

The kids immediately step back.

FIRST KID
 Sorry, Mr. LeFebre.

RALPH
 Just call me Ralph, kid.

SECOND KID
 Can we have your autograph, Ramblin'
 Ralph?

RALPH
 Ralph, just Ralph. I'm tired of
 ramblin'. Seriously tired of
 ramblin'.

The first kid shoves a CD J-card toward Ralph and Ralph pulls a pen from his shirt pocket.

RALPH (CONT'D)
 Kids still buyin' hard copy. I like
 that. What's your name?

From across the room, emerging from the interior of the auditorium a short, stocky man, PHILIP PANKIN, 40's, rushes toward Ralph and the boys while Ralph signs their CD's.

PHILIP

What the hell are you doing out here?

RALPH

Meetin' my public and tryin' ta get
a little sun.

PHILIP

You shouldn't be out here, Ralph.

RALPH

(to the boys)

He thinks ya might hurt me. Do either
of y'all have a gun?

FIRST KID

No.

SECOND KID

Would you like me to get you one
...Ralph?

RALPH

(slapping his leg,
laughing)

No, man, Philip is just concerned
about my safety here in the city of
brotherly love.

SECOND KID

Why?

RALPH

No reason, man. He's just paranoid.

PHILIP

Have you ever been to a Phillies
game?

RALPH

(ignoring Philip)

He thinks somebody's gonna mistake
me for John Lennon.

FIRST KID

You don't look anything like John
Lennon.

Ralph slaps his leg, again, and grins like an idiot.

RALPH

(to Philip)

See what you're missin' by not
minglin'?

PHILIP
We're ready for the sound check.

RALPH
I was just startin' ta relax.

FIRST KID
Can we watch?

PHILIP
No.

RALPH
Sure.

The boys look at each other, elated.

PHILIP
No, Ralph, that's not policy.

RALPH
I tell ya what, boys...

He reaches into his shirt pocket and pulls out two tickets.

RALPH (CONT'D)
Here.

SECOND KID
We already have tickets.

RALPH
These are fourth row, center.

The boys both smile ear to ear.

RALPH (CONT'D)
Scalp y'all's tickets. Buy some
drugs.

FIRST KID
Thanks, Ralph.

SECOND KID
Yeah, thanks, Ralph.

PHILIP
Can we go now?

RALPH
Anything else I can do for you, boys?

He stands, towering over everyone.

FIRST KID

What's your tuning on the Morey song?

Ralph slaps his leg and grins.

RALPH

CGCGCE. Good question, man. Really good question.

(to Philip)

See, Philip, this is what it's all about. The next generation. This is why I did what I did to get here. This is the trade-off, the reward. Right?

PHILIP

I have no freaking idea what you're talking about. Sound check, Ralph.

RALPH

(to the boys)

Thanks, again, boys. Enjoy the show.

He turns and on impossibly long legs, lopes toward the auditorium entrance while Philip scurries to catch up.

INT. HOTEL OFFICE - DAY

AHMAD FARUSI, large, middle-aged Iranian adorned with expensive rings and holding an unlit cigar sits behind a large, ornate desk.

Sag lies on a comfortable couch against the wall. He stares at the ceiling while he talks...

SAG

You can't buy people, Ahmad.

AHMAD

Seriously, Sag? This is your rebuttal?

SAG

I love Mrs. Goldberg.

AHMAD

You don't treat her like you love her, Sag. She's one of Allah's perfect creatures. She deserves more respect.

He picks up a framed picture on his desk and smiles.

SAG

Can we not talk about my wife. I need to know what you're willing to do about me getting my three million back.

AHMAD

She's not your wife, Sag. You've never given her the respect of marrying her. You have a child together. That's not respect.

He puts the picture down, lights the cigar and leans back in his chair.

AHMAD (CONT'D)

And now you're broke. Why should I do anything? You lost the money. I won the money. You still have your salon. You can earn more money.

SAG

You're not gonna give me a chance to win it back?

AHMAD

All you have is your salon, Sag. If we play again and I win, you'll be out on the street...and Mrs. Goldberg will surely leave you then anyway.

SAG

How about my salon against half of what I lost, a million and a half.

AHMAD

How about my original offer? Your salon and Mrs. Goldberg for what you lost.

The phone on his desk BUZZES and he picks it up.

AHMAD (CONT'D)

What?

(listening)

It's your department, make a decision. I don't care.

(listening)

It's your department!

He shakes the phone in his hand like he's squeezing the life out of it and then takes a breath and puts it down.

AHMAD (CONT'D)

Fucking kike.

Sag stares at the ceiling while Ahmad collects himself and then...

SAG

As I was saying, Ahmad, you can't buy people. This is America, not Iran.

AHMAD

How about your salon and Mrs. Goldberg against my fucking hotel...and I'll throw in your three million...and I won't kill you for your racist remark.

SAG

Your hotel?

(laughs)

Seriously? When you say "hotel", what exactly are you talkin' about?

AHMAD

I'm talking about the whole thing, Sag. The whole fucking block. Everything, all 47 floors, the whole fucking thing.

SAG

What happens if you lose?

AHMAD

I'll lie on the beach and let my money make money while you pull your hair out trying to keep this Gollum out of bankruptcy.

Sag sits up and looks at Ahmad.

SAG

You got another one of those?

Ahmad reaches into a box on his desk, clips off the end of a cigar and tosses Sag the cigar and a lighter.

Sag lights the cigar and CHOKES and COUGHS.

AHMAD

Do you need some water?

SAG

I'm fine, I'm fine.

AHMAD

I can have anything you want brought in.

SAG
I'm fine...okay.

AHMAD
Okay, what? You'll do it?

SAG
Fuck it, yeah, I'll do it. When?

AHMAD
I'm not done here until midnight. I usually like to get some dinner then. How about two o'clock, just like last night? Your lucky time, Sag.

He winks.

SAG
Right...okay then.

He stands and takes a careful hit, this time not coughing...then COUGHS a couple of times and stops.

AHMAD
Better.

He shrugs, stands, offers his hand to Sag.

Sag looks at the huge diamonds on two of Ahmad's fingers, the gold bracelet around Ahmad's wrist. He shakes Ahmad's hand.

AHMAD (CONT'D)
I'll call you with the details.

INT. FOSTER AND FELICITY'S HOTEL SUITE - DAY

The kitchen and dining area: a mess of beakers, boxes, Bunsen burners. On the couch, Foster Douglas, now 21, sits with his arm around FELICITY, 21, his wife. Felicity's in her third trimester.

Sag, holding a glass of wine, hangs his head.

FOSTER
You still have assets, Sag. You need to cut your losses and rebuild.

SAG
I can't find Mrs. Goldberg, Foster. Nobody's seen her today.

FELICITY
She's not answering her phone?

SAG

She didn't take her phone.

FELICITY

Really. That's not like her. You've checked the nursery?

SAG

I just came from there. Teddy's checking the video from all the exits. I'm getting a bad feeling.

FELICITY

You think something's happened to her?

SAG

I don't know, Felicity. I think maybe I screwed up.

FOSTER

Losing three million dollars in a poker game might piss a woman off.

FELICITY

I'd kill you. I'd wait 'til you were asleep and I'd wrap my thighs around your head and then I'd squeeze you 'til your eyes popped out.

The two guys look at Felicity and no one speaks.

FELICITY (CONT'D)

What? I'm hormonal.

Sag turns to Foster, then pauses.

FOSTER

Sag? I don't like that look. Nothing good happens proceeded by that look.

SAG

Do you know how to count cards?

FOSTER

I knew it. That's why you're here?

SAG

No, Foster, I'm looking for Mrs. Goldberg.

FOSTER

You want me to count cards. You know that won't work, Sag.

(MORE)

FOSTER (CONT'D)

Even if we could pull it off without Ahmad catching us and killing us, it won't work.

SAG

Can you do it or not? Here's my thinking. If I win you can have the entire sub-basement for a lab. We split the patents 50/50.

FOSTER

50/50? Who controls them?

Felicity shoots Foster an "I'll squeeze your head" look.

SAG

If we have to make a decision and we disagree on something, we'll flip a coin each time.

FOSTER

That's crazy. If I cure cancer or invent a new fuel, we flip a coin to decide how to present it to the world? ...I'm really close on the cancer thing.

SAG

I'll pay two thirds of the cost of setting it up since Farhad left me more money than he paid you for...the thing.

FOSTER

This is all moot, Sag. You're going to play one hand of poker. There won't be anything to count. It'll be over in two minutes.

Sag hangs his head again.

SAG

So I'm fucked.

FOSTER

No. There's almost no skill involved in one hand of poker. It's basically like picking red or black on a Roulette wheel.

FELICITY

Yeah, you're fucked.

INT. KIMMEL CENTER STAGE - DAY

Ralph's band is set up and ready for their sound check. Ralph stares at the empty guitar stands behind his microphone rig.

RALPH
Where the hell are my guitars?
Philip?

Philip approaches slowly.

PHILIP
We can't seem to find them. Use one
of Mikee's.

RALPH
Are you serious? Somebody bring me
my fuckin' guitars.

PHILIP
We've looked everywhere, Ralph.
They're not here.

RALPH
Are you fuckin' serious? Ya lost my
guitars?

He grabs one of the graphite composite acoustics set up behind Mikee, the lead guitarist.

RALPH (CONT'D)
Y'all better fuckin' find 'em before
show time.

He reaches for a cord draped on his mic boom, plugs the guitar in, then slides a capo onto the first fret and checks the tuning.

He reaches for the harmonica rig hanging on the mic stand, checks the harmonica, puts it on.

He turns to the drummer.

RALPH (CONT'D)
"Where's the Boy".

The drummer clicks his sticks twice then does a two beat intro and AMAZING MUSIC fills the empty auditorium.

INT. BANG SALON (BACK ROOM) - DAY

Farhad and Brian sit at the table LAUGHING.

Sag bursts into the room.

SAG
 (to Farhad)
 Come on, man, let's go. You have a
 break, now. I just checked.

FARHAD
 (affected voice)
 I don't want to go anywhere, Sag.
 I'm talking to Brian.

SAG
 Come on, we have forty minutes.
 It's important.

FARHAD
 Is it about Mrs. Goldberg? I hope
 it's not bad news, Sag.

SAG
 Will you stop talking like that?
 It's just us, Farhad. Come on, get
 up.

FARHAD
 (to Brian)
 I'll be back in a little while, Brian.

He stands.

SAG
 This way.

He opens the back door and waits for Farhad to exit ahead of
 him.

EXT. SIDEWALK - DAY

Sag lets the door close behind them.

Albert's still sitting on the pavement, leaning against the
 building.

ALBERT
 (singing)
 Up, up and away in my beautiful, my
 beautiful...

FARHAD
 Hello, Albert.

He reaches into his pocket, pulls out a ten, hands it to
 Albert. Albert smiles even broader than he was smiling before
 being handed the money.

ALBERT

What's wrong with your voice, Mr.
Farusi?

Farhad gives him a puzzled look.

SAG

Come on, man.

He starts off down the sidewalk. Farhad flits and flutters
until he catches up.

FARHAD

Where are we going?

SAG

Please stop walking that way.

FARHAD

What way?

In front of BUMPS Sag stops and opens the door for Farhad.

Farhad looks in then takes a step back.

FARHAD (CONT'D)

This is a strip club, Sag. I don't
want to go here.

He backs up another step and looks at the awning.

FARHAD (CONT'D)

This is Bumps, Sag. Why didn't we
just walk across the lobby?

SAG

I didn't want anyone to see us going
in here in the middle of the day.

FARHAD

Who would see us?

SAG

Just go in.

Farhad pulls the door open again and enters.

INT. BUMPS STRIP CLUB - DAY

Sag and Farhad enter the main room. MUSIC blasts. This is
an up-scale nude dancing establishment. Scantily clothed
women and fully nude women are everywhere.

Sag and Farhad settle in in front of one of the long catwalks where women undulate in front of mostly drunk conventioners who are still wearing their name tags.

SAG

Wow. I can't believe this place.

FARHAD

Why did you bring me here?

SAG

Because tomorrow I might not be around to save you.

FARHAD

I don't understand, Sag.

A WAITRESS in a sheer body stocking shimmies up to them.

WAITRESS

What can I get you guys?

SAG

A Remy Martin for me and a coke for him.

FARHAD

No, no, an ouzo for me, and a glass of house chardonay for him. Remy Martin is too expensive, Sag.

SAG

You're working, Farhad...and it doesn't matter how much I spend today. Tomorrow I'll either be broke or fabulously wealthy.

FARHAD

(to the waitress)
Bring me the ouzo, please.

SAG

...and the Remy for me. XO.

WAITRESS

Are you sure y'all are in the right place?

SAG

We're not gay.

FARHAD

Speak for yourself, Sag.

SAG

He's not gay. He's just confused.

WAITRESS

He's over thirty, right? Maybe you're the one who's confused.

She walks off toward the bar.

Two startlingly beautiful women, ANGEL and RAVEN, slide up behind Sag and Farhad and simultaneously tap them on the shoulder.

They turn.

The women smile.

They're in red bra, panties, and garters, house uniform for women not on stage. Raven's hair is wild, jet-black, spiked. Angel has long classically beautiful wavy blonde cascades. They each have a gold neckless sporting their dancing names.

RAVEN

Would you guys like a private lap dance?

SAG

My friend, here, would.

FARHAD

(to Sag)

No, I wouldn't.

SAG

Just try it, see what happens.

FARHAD

I don't want to, Sag.

Raven takes Farhad's hand and tugs until he stands.

The waitress returns, places the drinks down. Farhad lifts his, downs it in two chugs.

Raven smiles...

RAVEN

Come on, Elvis.

...and leads him toward one of the smaller rooms.

ANGEL

What about you?

SAG
I'm fine, thanks.

He lifts his drink and sips at it.

Angel takes his free hand.

ANGEL
Are you sure?

SAG
I'm not sure of anything, today.

ANGEL
Come on.

She looks toward the lap dance room then back to Sag.

SAG
Would you like to sit down? We could
talk 'til they get back.

Angel pulls on Sag's hand then leans back for mock leverage
and GRUNTS.

ANGEL
We can talk back there. Come on.
It'll keep me from having to entertain
some sweaty, convention du jour drunk.

SAG
Nobody talks back there.

ANGEL
What? Sure they do. Come on.

Sag downs his drink and stands. They walk toward the...

SMALLER ROOM

...where the MUSIC is quieter, slower, the lighting more
subdued. Angel leads Sag to a seat near Farhad and Raven.
She stands over him between his knees and smiles. She turns
and watches Farhad and Raven.

Raven, fully nude, straddles Farhad's lap and waves her boobs
against his chin. His arms are at his side. Her arms are
around his neck. She sways to the music pummeling him when
he speaks.

FARHAD
Your hair is like my friend, Brian's.
His is a little longer but the cut
is very similar.

Angel CHUCKLES and reaches for the clasp between her cups, then makes unblinking eye contact with Sag and drops her bra. Sag's eyes open wider.

ANGEL
 (leaning toward him
 and whispering)
 Pull my panties down.

SAG
 That's not allowed, is it?

ANGEL
 Nobody's looking.

She leans again, close enough to kiss, and whispers...

ANGEL (CONT'D)
 Just do it.

Sag does as told and she steps out of her panties and settles down onto his lap wiggling to get a firm fit. She puts her arms around his neck and leans her forehead against his, their eyelashes nearly touching.

ANGEL (CONT'D)
 Put your hands on my hips.

SAG
 I know that's not allowed.

ANGEL
 Do it.

Sag raises his arms from his side and places his hands on her hips.

SAG
 Oh, my God.

He's weak. His lips, two inches from hers, part. He EXHALES HOARSELY on her.

She smiles. She leans in closer, their lips touch. She pulls back a few inches, studies him, their eyes locked and wild. She leans forward, kisses him, slowly, gently. She pulls back again.

Again she leans in, kisses him much longer this time, grinds her bottom against him.

FARHAD
 Sag. What are you doing?

Sag and Angel continue to ferally kiss and grind.

Farhad and Raven watch, their expressions slack, their mouths open.

RAVEN

Abby.

Angel breaks contact, panting, but continues to stare into Sag's eyes.

RAVEN (CONT'D)

What're you doing?

ANGEL

I don't know. Wow.

Sag can't take his eyes off Angel. He moves his hands down around her butt then down her thighs and up her belly to her boobs then leans up and kisses her and they're at it again, two wild animals.

RAVEN

Abby! Stop! You're gonna get fired!

Sag pushes Angel back still making intense eye contact.

SAG

We have to go.

He reaches into his pocket, pulls out a wad of bills and hands them to Angel closing her hand around them with both of his.

SAG (CONT'D)

That was...

ANGEL

Yeah.

SAG

Huh.

FARHAD

I have to get back to the salon.

SAG

(to Angel)

We work at Bang across the lobby from here.

ANGEL

I know. You own it.

SAG

Yeah.

ANGEL

I've seen you in there. Your wife manages it.

FARHAD

They're not married. He doesn't respect her enough to marry her.

SAG

Not true. It's complicated.

FARHAD

Sag, there's a naked woman sitting on your lap and you just mopped out her mouth with your tongue.

Farhad stands and walks toward the opening to the main room.

FARHAD (CONT'D)

(flapping his hands)

We need to go!

ANGEL

(to Sag)

You know where to find me.

She stands and gathers her underwear.

Farhad and Raven leave the room.

SAG

Your real name is Abby?

He stands and watches her dress.

ANGEL

And your real name is Sidney.

SAG

You're stalking me?

ANGEL

I saw you in the salon. I asked around... You have a child.

SAG

Sorta.

ANGEL

What does that mean?

SAG

It's complicated. Please don't ask me for details. I'll tell you sometime. I promise.

ANGEL

We're going to see each other again?

SAG

Actually, depending on how tonight goes, maybe not.

ANGEL

What we just did? I wasn't faking. That was amazing. It'd be a tragedy to not...follow up...right?

SAG

This is gonna sound crazy, but tonight at about 2:05, I'm either gonna be flat broke with no prospects or one of the richest guys in Atlantic City.

ANGEL

So if it's that second one, you'll call?

INT. KIMMEL CENTER AUDITORIUM - EVENING

Onstage Ralph and his band fill the room with the supra chorus of THE WHEEL...

RALPH AND BAND

'Round and 'round tail to mouth
Heading north and ending south
Dig your hole 'til ya strike the sky

The crowd gets to it's feet anticipating the end...

RALPH AND BAND (CONT'D)

On and on 'til it ends
At the point where it begins
Spin the wheel spin the wheel
One more time

By the outro the entire auditorium is on its feet and when the song ends the place erupts in THUNDEROUS APPLAUSE.

RALPH

Thanks, y'all, you've been a great audience. I wish I could take ya on the road with me. Thank ya Philadelphia for sharin' your love.

More APPLAUSE.

RALPH (CONT'D)

We're gonna do one more for ya.

The still standing audience shouts out song titles...

AUDIENT 1

"This World"!

AUDIENT 2

"Waiting for the Wall to Fall"!

A bearded, long-haired kid in the fourth row standing next to the two autograph seekers from earlier in the day shouts his request.

BEARDED KID

"Someday"!

Ralph hangs his head and smiles.

RALPH

Ya know I can't do that anymore. I retired that one after the Big Bang. Too much sadness bein' a phophet.

BEARDED KID

You didn't predict it, you caused it!

He pulls out a crude, home-made ceramic one-shot and points it at Ralph. The two kids from earlier lunge at him and grab his arm but he manages to get a SHOT off.

Ralph's mic boom stand spins violently and falls over as the head of Ralph's borrowed guitar EXPLODES and the strings go limp.

RALPH

Fuck!

The house lights come up. People stampede for the exits.

In the fourth row, the autograph kids and a couple of other fans subdue the shooter. His wig has fallen off and his beard hangs unattached on one side.

Ralph, still onstage, stares at the kid and the kid stares back.

INT. SAG'S HOTEL SUITE - NIGHT

Sag asleep on the couch.

MELODY (O.S.)

Doopy, doopy, do...doopy, doopy,
do...Sag...Sag...

*

Sag's eyes open. Melody, in black and red polka dot bra and panties is sitting on the arm of the couch by Sag's feet.

SAG

What?

MELODY

I heard about your little adventure this afternoon.

SAG

Are you jealous?

MELODY

Hmmm. You tried to turn Brain Trauma Boy back into a heterosexual and it backfired.

SAG

You're making fun of Farhad's brain injury? His brain is getting better. The gay thing is temporary. His rewiring just isn't complete yet.

Melody makes a cartoonish face of skepticism.

MELODY

But your heterosexuality seems to have reawakened.

SAG

Mine never left. Mrs. Goldberg and I just cooled down a bit after the baby.

MELODY

Y'all had maybe one hot month back three years ago. And it was never that hot. Be honest with yourself.

She hops off the couch's arm and does yoga poses.

SAG

Are you jealous of that girl this afternoon?

MELODY

Can I be jealous?

SAG

I don't know. Are you hurt?

MELODY

Next subject. Mrs. Goldberg didn't leave the building through any of the exits, but that's all Teddy checked on the surveillance.

SAG

Oh, my God. Why not just check our hallway and see which way she went. She must still be in the building.

Melody pounces around like the apes in "2001" and looks up at the non-existent monolith in front of her while mock-singing the opening bars of ALSO SPRACH ZARATHUSTRA.

MELODY

Daaan, daaan, daadaan! Daadaan!
Daant, daant, daant, daant....

She stops abruptly and turns to Sag. She leans down and puckers her lips while shimmying up to him.

He closes his eyes.

MELODY (CONT'D)

Now kiss your little angel.

Her eyes close as her lips move to within an inch of his and then they open wide.

MELODY (CONT'D)

Wake up!

Sag opens his eyes and sits up. He's alone in the room.

He hears THUMPING and gets up and opens his front door.

INT. HOTEL HALLWAY - NIGHT

A couple of doors down, movers are emptying Farhad's suite of most of the beautiful, modern furniture and taking in dark, overstuffed velvet couches and chairs.

Farhad emerges from his suite as Sag approaches from down the hall.

FARHAD

Come look, Sag.

Sag looks into the room and sees the antique furniture.

SAG

That can't be your old stuff.

FARHAD

(laughs)

Of course not, Sag. Too hot to cot.
Whatever that means.

SAG

Where'd you find this stuff?

FARHAD

The same place I found my old furniture.

SAG

You remember buying your old furniture?

FARHAD

Of course not, Sag. I was talking to Ralph last week after I saw some YouTubes of him playing and singing at a house concert in my old place.

SAG

I remember when you bought that stuff. I talked you into the lava lamps. You didn't want 'em at first.

FARHAD

Come look, Sag.

They step into...

FARHAD'S SUITE

FARHAD (CONT'D)

Look!

He points to a corner where three lava lamps sit freshly unpacked, the cords still bundled.

SAG

Yeah, baby. Now all we need is hash oil and Ramblin' Ralph LeFebre.

Farhad GIGGLES, puts his fingertips over his mouth then flaps his hands.

FARHAD

Guess what?

SAG

Jesus, Farhad.

FARHAD

Guess, Sag.

SAG

You found Mrs. Goldberg?

FARHAD

No, that's not it. Guess.

SAG

Just tell me.

FARHAD

Ralph is coming...tonight, and he's bringing hash oil.

SAG

Really?

FARHAD

We're going to have a party like the old days.

SAG

But you don't remember the old days.

FARHAD

Now I don't have to.

SAG

When did you talk to Ralph?

FARHAD

Right after the shooting.

SAG

What shooting?

FARHAD

At his concert. Somebody tried to kill Ralph.

SAG

Seriously?

FARHAD

It's always serious when somebody tries to kill you, Sag.

SAG

Was he hurt?

FARHAD

He says they shot him in the guitar.

SAG

Wow. When's he getting here?

FARHAD

He's taking a helicopter. He's going to land on the roof.

TEDDY, 40, a security guard, hurries into the suite past the movers as they're leaving.

TEDDY

Here you are, Mr. Gold. I'm glad I caught you before my shift ended. Mrs. G. and little Joshua went up to the roof this morning around 9am.

SAG

Yeah?

TEDDY

You'll never believe this.

SAG

What, Teddy? You're scarin' me.

Teddy hands Sag an iPad and taps the screen.

IPAD SCREEN

A balloon gondola bounces down onto a helicopter pad and a woman quickly hands a small child up to a bearded man wearing a hat and then she's quickly lifted in. Two seconds later they're gone.

SAG (CONT'D)

Was that a hot air balloon?

TEDDY

It was some kind of balloon. I've watched it a dozen times. You can't tell much. It was definitely Mrs. G. and the boy...

Teddy looks down at his shoes.

TEDDY (CONT'D)

...and they weren't kidnapped.

SAG

Play it again.

TEDDY

Keep the pad, Mr. G. I'll catch you tomorrow.

SAG

Thanks for doing this, Teddy. I appreciate it.

Teddy nods then walks toward the open door.

SAG (CONT'D)

Teddy...

Teddy stops and turns.

SAG (CONT'D)
Who's seen this?

TEDDY
Just me...and you guys.

He points to Sag and Farhad.

Sag looks at Farhad who's standing beside him. There's a tear in Farhad's eye.

SAG
Let's keep it that way...for now.
Okay?

TEDDY
Sure, Mr. G.

Farhad is really teared up now and begins to shake.

Teddy leaves, closes the door behind him.

Sag flops down on one of the couches and taps the iPad and stares.

There's a KNOCK at the door.

Farhad, who's now blubbering, opens it.

Ralph stands there with a crazy smile on his face and a mylar helium balloon in his hand. On the floor beside him is a hard shell overnight bag and a guitar case.

RALPH
My brotha!

He steps in and bear-hugs Farhad who's still crying.

RALPH (CONT'D)
I'm okay, man. I'm bullet proof.
Get a hold of ya'self. I'm fine.

He sees Sag on the couch.

RALPH (CONT'D)
Hey, man. What's up?

Sag looks up from the pad and stares.

SAG
Hey, Ralph.

Ralph picks up the overnight bag and guitar case, lopes over to the couch and sits beside Sag.

He pulls a red envelope from his jacket pocket and hands the balloon and envelope to Sag.

RALPH

This's got your name on it, man. It was up on the roof.

Sag sets the iPad down between Ralph and him and takes the envelope and the balloon. He lets go of the balloon's ribbon and watches as it floats up to the ceiling then opens the envelope and pulls out the card.

Ralph picks up the pad and watches as Sag reads the card.

RALPH (CONT'D)

What is this?

FARHAD

Mrs. Goldberg has left us, Ralph. She took the baby and flew away.

RALPH

That's a balloon?

He turns to Sag.

RALPH (CONT'D)

What's goin' on, man?

Sag gets up and walks toward the door.

FARHAD

You can't leave. We're going to have a party. Like the old days.

RALPH

(to Farhad)

You remember the old days? That's great, man, welcome back.

FARHAD

No, no, but I've seen pictures on Facebook.

RALPH

Who posted 'em?

FARHAD

I did. Before the accident, of course.

SAG

(loudly)

I'm leaving. I feel sick.

FARHAD

I will call you when we're ready to start.

He looks around the room, then claps his hands together a few times under his chin.

FARHAD (CONT'D)

I need to decorate.

Sag shakes his head and leaves and enters the...

HALL

...and walks down fifty feet to his suite's door and opens it and enters.

INT. SAG'S SUITE - CONTINUOUS

Sag closes the door, stares at the open card, reads the note again.

He walks to the refrigerator, sticks the card up on the side of it using a magnet, and pulls a bottle of Jaegermeister from the freezer and takes a swig.

There's a KNOCK at the door. He ignores it and takes another swig. There's another KNOCK.

He angrily rushes to the door and flings it open. Angel stands there in a long white coat.

ANGEL

Hi.

SAG

Hey. What are you doin' here?

ANGEL

I know this is inappropriate, but I just wanted to see you. I know you're...involved.

She peeks around him, looks for signs of someone else in the room.

SAG

Actually, no.

ANGEL

No?

SAG

Would you like to come in?

She smiles and steps through the doorway.

SAG (CONT'D)
Want a drink?

ANGEL
Sure.

She takes the bottle from his hand and throws down a double swig, then does it again and BURPS.

ANGEL (CONT'D)
Oh, my goodness.

She covers her mouth and LAUGHS.

SAG
How'd you find me?

ANGEL
Teddy, the security guy. He comes into the club.

She takes another swig.

ANGEL (CONT'D)
I got fired.

SAG
Because of me?

ANGEL
Because of us. Because of our...chemistry.

SAG
Yeah, our chemistry.

They're staring at each other. She unbuttons her coat and lets it fall to the floor. She's wearing her red underwear from work.

She throws her arms around him, kisses him savagely and jumps up locking her legs around his hips.

He stumbles with her, still kissing her, toward the bedroom.

INT. FARHAD'S HOTEL SUITE - NIGHT

The room's only light is from the lava lamps creating the ambiance of an opium den.

Farhad sits on an overstuffed, velvet couch GIGGLING while Ralph on an overstuffed chair loads black tar into a glass pipe.

Foster and Felicity on the love seat hold hands and watch.

FELICITY

(to Foster)

You're sure it won't hurt the baby?

FOSTER

There won't be enough second-hand smoke to do anything. You'll be fine.

(to her belly)

You'll be fine, too.

Felicity smiles and runs her fingers through his messy hair.

Ralph hands the loaded bowl and a lighter to Farhad.

RALPH

Start us off, Farhad. Here's ta lasting friendships.

He raises his wine glass and Foster and Felicity raise their glasses while Farhad ignites the glass pipe.

Ralph opens the guitar case at his feet, removes the guitar, and begins to NOODLE.

RALPH (CONT'D)

This brings back so many memories.

Farhad passes him the pipe and with the guitar tucked under his elbows he fires the tar.

Farhad sinks deeper into the couch.

FARHAD

Not really.

Ralph slaps his leg and LAUGHS.

RALPH

That was a really long reaction time, Farhad.

FOSTER

Yeah, it was.

Ralph passes the pipe to Foster. Felicity watches, concerned as Foster reloads the pipe and fires it.

FELICITY

You did that like a pro.

FOSTER

I've had a little practice.

Ralph CHUCKLES while he NOODLES.

FELICITY

(to Foster)

Do you mind if I take a little nap?
It's way past my bedtime and I don't
want to miss the big card game.

She lies back in the engulfing cushions and smiles against Foster's shoulder.

RALPH

Just like Mrs. Goldberg used ta do.

Felicity opens an eye and frowns.

RALPH (CONT'D)

(laughing)

The nap part, cher. Not the snugglin'
part. Young Foster would've stickied
his pants if that'd happened.

*

She frowns deeper.

RALPH (CONT'D)

He had a major thing for her back
then. She's le meilleur MILF as ya
know.

FOSTER

I forgot how stupid you get when you
smoke, Ralph. Please shut up.

RALPH

And I forgot ya were married there
for a second. Sorry, man. Sorry,
Felicity.

(to Felicity)

He was just a kid back then.

Felicity SIGHS and closes her eyes again.

Farhad takes the pipe from Foster, fires it up, and leans
back into the mushy couch.

Foster looks at his sleeping wife.

FOSTER

Did Mrs. Goldberg ever show up?

Ralph and Farhad look at each other. Ralph stops NOODLING.
SILENCE.

FARHAD

There has been an incident, Foster.

Ralph explodes in LAUGHTER, slaps his leg.

Felicity opens an eye and frowns. Foster looks at her.

FOSTER

Go back to sleep, sweetie.

He strokes her hair, she smiles.

RALPH

I didn't mean ta laugh, man. It just sounded so funny the way ya said it. "There has been an incident".

He slaps his leg, Felicity, eyes closed, frowns again.

INT. SAG'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Sag is asleep on the still made but ruffled bed, naked, on his back. Angel, also asleep, is naked on top of him.

Melody, in red and white polka dot panties and bra is lying beside them on her side propped on an elbow with her hand behind her head. Her lips are pursed as she twitches them side to side.

MELODY

Sag.
(louder)
Sidney.

He opens his eyes and looks over at Melody. Guilt fills his face. He opens his mouth to speak but then says nothing.

MELODY (CONT'D)

Pussy got your tongue? I can't believe this. In my bed.

SAG

This isn't your bed.

MELODY

You know what I mean.

SAG

Not really.

MELODY

I'm here every night and every morning.

SAG

That's certainly true, but you're not real, Melody.

MELODY

I'll show you what's not real.

She raises an eyebrow and points to Angel's naked butt.

MELODY (CONT'D)

Have you ever seen anything like it?
How can I compete...with this? If I
slapped it, my hand would bounce
back and slap my face.

She fakes the action and when her hand bounces back to fake
slap her face, she falls back dramatically against the pillow.

MELODY (CONT'D)

How can I compete?

SAG

I think we both know...by now...I'm
never gonna stop loving you,
Melody...but life goes on.

MELODY

Maybe for you.

She puts her hands over her eyes and seems to SOB for a few
seconds and then spreads her fingers to allow an eye to be
seen and then...

MELODY (CONT'D)

Wake up!

INT. FARHAD'S HOTEL SUITE - NIGHT

Foster and Felicity sleep while Ralph NOODLES and Farhad
takes a hit on the pipe.

There's a KNOCK at the door.

FARHAD

(in a non-affected
voice)

Are you expecting anyone?

Ralph GIGGLES and CHORTLES.

RALPH

It's your place, man. It's probably
just Sag.

FARHAD

Oh, yeah, Sag. I didn't know where
I was for a second. The place looks
so different.

RALPH

It looks a lot like your old place
ya blew up over on Gramercy Park.

FARHAD

What are you talking about?

Ralph stares at Farhad and hesitates.

RALPH

Oh...nothin', man, I was just
blabberin'.

Farhad gets up, wobbles to the door, and opens it.

It's Sag and Angel. Angel is wearing a long flowered print
dress.

Farhad studies Angel a second.

FARHAD

You're the girl from Bumps.

Sag leads Angel past Farhad into the room.

RALPH

Sag! How are ya my friend?

He extends his hand.

Sag looks puzzled.

They shake.

SAG

I just saw you an hour and a half
ago.

RALPH

Ya might be right.

SAG

This is Angel.

ANGEL

You're Ramblin' Ralph LeFebre.

RALPH

Yes, I am. Nice to meet ya.

ANGEL

Wow.

SAG

Don't be too overwhelmed. He's a lot less impressive in person than he is on stage.

Ralph grins.

RALPH

I can't argue with that. I'm a monster on stage.

Farhad closes the door and they all sit on the couch.

FARHAD

Sag, you're not stoned. Tell me, what did I do to my place on Gramercy Park?

Sag looks at Farhad, then at Ralph who's eyebrows are raised.

SAG

I'm not sure what you mean. Why're you asking?

FARHAD

Ralph said this room looks like the place I blew up on Gramercy Park.

Sag stares at Ralph.

SAG

Ralph said that? Ralph's stoned.

ANGEL

You're not...

Sag squeezes hard on her hand that he's holding.

ANGEL (CONT'D)

(turning to Sag)

What? I was going to say...

Sag squeezes again.

She stares at him while she speaks.

ANGEL (CONT'D)

I was going to say, he's not speaking like he's gay, anymore.

(to Farhad)

You're not. Raven's lap dance must have fixed you.

She looks at Sag.

RALPH

He's just high. His broken brain
forgot ta forget he was straight.

He slaps his leg and LAUGHS at his own cleverness.

ANGEL

(to Sag)

What's going on here? What did you
think I was going to say?

RALPH

Oh, Jesus, Sag, he's gotta find out
sometime, why not now?

He turns to Farhad.

SAG

What are you doing, Ralph?

RALPH

Ya know that colossal hole in
Manhattan from Gramercy Park ta Sixty-
seventh Street? Well, mon ami, you...

SAG

No! Ralph...

RALPH

...put it there.

SAG

...you idiot!

Foster and Felicity startle awake as Angel and Farhad stare
at Sag and Ralph.

Felicity sees Angel and stares for a moment.

FELICITY

I thought you were Mrs. Goldberg for
a second. She has a dress just like
that.

SAG

Not anymore.

ANGEL

I'm Angel.

FELICITY

Felicity.

FOSTER

Foster.

Angel turns to Ralph.

ANGEL

So, Stringbean, what you're saying is he's responsible for the New York Bang because he's a Muslim? Isn't that a bit racist?

RALPH

What're ya talkin' about? I'm not a racist, cher. Ya know my Ma used to call me Stringbean.

He grins.

SAG

Ralph just meant that we sometimes have to take responsibility for our people's sins.

He picks up the pipe from the coffee table, lights it, and falls back into the couch.

SAG (CONT'D)

Wow.

He slowly leans forward and reloads the glass pipe and hits it again.

SAG (CONT'D)

Oh, Jesus, God.

He freezes a moment, not blinking, then continues.

SAG (CONT'D)

For instance I feel a little responsible for Israel refusing to negotiate peace because my Dad is Jewish.

ANGEL

You're stoned. No one even knows for sure if it was a Muslim who detonated the bomb.

(to Ralph)

I think you owe him an apology.

Ralph looks at Sag and shakes his head. Then he turns to Farhad.

RALPH

I'm sorry, man. I'm in the slippery grip of the Black HO.

FOSTER
(to Felicity,
whispering)
Hash oil.

FELICITY
(frowning)
I know.

RALPH
Let's pass the pipe and forget about
all this.

Sag hands the pipe to Angel.

ANGEL
What is this?

SAG
Hash oil.
(points to Ralph)
The Black Ho.

Angel nods.

SAG (CONT'D)
We used to smoke it all the time
back in New York. It's pretty mild
unless you do a bunch.

He looks again at Ralph who's back to grinning.

ANGEL
Sure, just one hit, 'cause you've
done two...and you're a mess.

Sag lights it for her and she breathes in the smoke and then
leans back into the couch.

ANGEL (CONT'D)
Holy shit.

Ralph slaps his leg and CHORTLES.

Sag takes a hit. His eyelids slowly close then slowly open.

SAG
Wow... Uhh...
(to Foster)
Any last minute tips?

FOSTER
Just don't do anything stupid. It's
not like normal poker.
(MORE)

FOSTER (CONT'D)

You can't fold if you have nothing.
You could win it just by having high
card.

SAG

(eyes closing)
So, what constitutes stupid?

FELICITY

Smoking that crap before the most
important event of your life...
(gestures to the whole
room)
...everyone's life. Do not take
another hit.

FOSTER

Don't draw for a straight or a flush.
Just throw away three cards if you've
got nothing and draw three more. No
swinging for the fences. It's mostly
chance.

SAG

(trying to open his
lids, speaks slowly)
Don't anyone tell Ahmad that Mrs.
Goldberg isn't in this building.
Understand? Ralph?

Everyone nods.

SAG (CONT'D)

Ralph?

RALPH

Why can't Ahmad know that Mrs. G.
isn't here?

Sag's eyes droop closed again.

SAG

Because part of the bet is Mrs.
Goldberg. He thinks he gets Mrs.
Goldberg if he wins.

ANGEL

You bet your wife against his hotel?

She lets go of Sag's hand and leans away.

FOSTER

I knew there was more to it.

SAG
 (with eyes closed
 leans to Angel)
 She's not my wife.

ANGEL
 That makes it okay? I just had the
 best sex of my life with a slave
 trader.

FOSTER, FELICITY, AND FARHAD
 You had sex?

...and then...

RALPH
 Y'all fucked?

SAG
 (to Angel, one eye
 open)
 It was...not of this world.

No one moves for a moment.

Sag tries to sit up straighter and open his eyes.

SAG (CONT'D)
 I didn't bet Mrs. Goldberg. I was
 gonna get her out of the building
 but she beat me to it. Ahmad doesn't
 know that. And nobody can tell him.

He looks seriously at Farhad.

SAG (CONT'D)
 Farhad? You understand?

FARHAD
 Yes, but he's my cousin, Sag.

SAG
 Yeah, and I'm your best friend, and
 I've stuck with you through a lot of
 shit, before and after your accident.

FARHAD
 But he's my blood, Sag.

SAG
 And I'll give you the salon if I
 win.

FARHAD
 Okay.

Felicity stares at Sag a moment.

FELICITY
 (to Sag)
 Ahmad's going to kill you if you
 lose.

Everyone looks at Sag.

FARHAD
 He's never killed anyone...

A collective SIGH...

FARHAD (CONT'D)
 ...he has Bijou do it for him.

FOSTER
 (looking at his watch)
 It's a quarter to two.

SAG
 All right then.

He tries to stand and plops back down on the couch. He tries it again and succeeds.

SAG (CONT'D)
 But first...

He sticks the pipe in his mouth and ignites the tar.

FELICITY
 No, you dumb ass!

Sag blows out a tiny stream of smoke.

SAG
 March me to my fate.

INT. CASINO (HIGH ROLLER ROOM) - NIGHT

Ornate walls, no mirrors, a small bar on one side with several stools along its length, a large, round table in the center of the room, six chairs around it.

Seated at the table are Ahmad and NAOMI WILLIAMS, 40's, pin-striped, three-piece suit.

A bartender patrols the empty bar. A dealer, DANNY, 35, gaunt, red-eyed, waits to deal.

The door opens and in walk Farhad, Foster and Felicity followed by Ralph, Angel and Sag.

They're all different levels of stoned and move a little wobbly, except for Felicity who's pregnant and moves the same way, and Sag who's wasted and is being held up by Angel.

AHMAD

Look at this. Not just the usual gang, Sag...but where's Mrs. Goldberg?

FELICITY

(sarcastically)

You know they have a small child, right?

AHMAD

(to Farhad)

Hello, cousin...

Farhad, grins sheepishly and sits down beside Ahmad as Foster and Felicity sit down on bar stools.

AHMAD (CONT'D)

I see you also brought the foul-mouth rock star...and, is that your whore? I almost didn't recognize her with her clothes on.

ANGEL

Who the hell are you?

AHMAD

I was your boss until a few hours ago.

ANGEL

You had me fired?

AHMAD

I fired you.

(to Sag)

I watched your video, Sag. So disrespectful to Mrs. Goldberg.

He shakes his head.

AHMAD (CONT'D)

(to Ralph)

And I can't believe you have the nerve to come here after our last conversation.

RALPH

I just say it like I see it, Ahmad. I'm not gonna be told how ta do my show.

AHMAD

I offered you a chance to get off
the road and you spit in my face.

RALPH

When I'm onstage I sing what I want
and I say what I want. I fill concert
halls around the globe.

SAG

(smiling stupidly)
Okay, boys.

He sits down across from Ahmad.

SAG (CONT'D)

Lay it on me.

AHMAD

Naomi has drawn up a very simple
agreement. Read it over and sign
all three copies, and two of you
will witness it.

Naomi passes the papers to Sag.

Sag stares at them and smiles.

Foster gets off his barstool and takes the pages from Sag.

FOSTER

Give me that.

He speed reads through them.

ANGEL

(to Foster)
Can I see that?

Everyone looks at her...

ANGEL (CONT'D)

I worked as a paralegal for a year
after college...and I have a Masters
Degree in bio-engineering, not that
that's pertinent here...and...I've
only had one hit.

SAG

Huh.

FOSTER

Where'd you go to school?

He sits at the table, and smiles up at her, interested in her for the first time.

ANGEL

Princeton. I was only dancing so I could afford to finish my PhD.

FOSTER

Really. Huh.

Felicity glares at both of them while opening her thighs and then suddenly slamming them shut.

ANGEL

(to Ahmad)

May I sit, your majesty?

Ahmad does an indifferent, smug shrug, and Angel sits and reads the copy Foster passes to her.

AHMAD

You'll be dealt five cards. You may discard three cards. Since we're only playing one hand, we'll draw one card to see which direction play goes.

He takes a sip of his soft drink.

AHMAD (CONT'D)

Any questions?

Sag looks at Foster and Angel.

Foster gives a slight shake of his head.

Angel shrugs her shoulders, mocking Ahmad's gesture.

FOSTER

(to Sag)

The loser has to be off the property in 72 hours. Ownership changes hands immediately.

Sag nods and signs.

AHMAD

They can witness.

Foster and Angel sign the documents.

SAG
 (looks through half-
 closed eyelids)
 Abigaile Porizkaya. What a beautiful
 name.

Still smiling, Sag closes his eyes.

Angel smiles and stands.

AHMAD
 You don't have to leave. Stay there
 and distract him.

Angel sits back down.

FOSTER
 Can we consult? As you see, he's
 stoned.

AHMAD
 You all look stoned.

FOSTER
 Yeah, but he's really stoned.

AHMAD
 (scratching his chin)
 Sure, consult away brain boy, but
 what difference can it make?
 (to Angel)
 Draw a card. If it's red, I draw
 first. If it's black, Sag, you draw
 first.

SAG
 (eyes closed)
 Why does it matter?

*

AHMAD
 It doesn't really. It's just that
 we're only playing one hand and it
 seems fair to choose who draws first.
 Do you understand?

SAG
 Not really. Just do it.

The dealer, Danny, presents the deck to Angel. She draws a RED CARD, shows it to everyone, then places it back in the middle of the deck. Danny shuffles and hands out five cards each to Ahmad and Sag.

RALPH

This is so fuckin' excitin', y'all,
I can barely contain myself.

AHMAD

(waiting for his cards)
You aren't containing yourself.

ANGEL

Sag, your cards.

Sag's eyes open for a moment and he peeks at his cards. His eyes close again.

MELODY (O.S.)

This is so exciting!

Sag opens his eyes. Melody, in polka-heart black and red panties and bra and wearing a tiara, sits cross-legged in front of him on the poker table.

MELODY (CONT'D)

If you win this, everybody's life in this room will change. Think about it. Everybody's.

SAG

(thinking)
Except, maybe Ralph's.

MELODY

He'll come play here for you, Sag. He's sick of being on the road. Offer him a six months booking, no strings attached.

SAG

You think he'll do it?

MELODY

He'll do it.

She leans down toward him.

MELODY (CONT'D)

Gimme a kiss.

He closes his eyes and puckers.

ANGEL (O.S.)

Sag, are you okay?

Sag's eyes open, his lips still puckered.

AHMAD
 (to the dealer while
 staring at Sag)
 Give me two cards.

COMPLETE SILENCE.

Ahmad smiles. No poker face needed.

Everyone realizes he must have three of a kind.

FOSTER
 (under his breath)
 Fuck.

Felicity holds her belly and makes a sad face.

Danny slides two cards to Ahmad.

AHMAD
 Ralph, you and this whore will have
 two minutes to get out of my building
 from the time Sag shows his cards.
 The rest of you will have 72 hours.

FARHAD
 You're throwing me out, too?

AHMAD
 You can stay.

Sag peeks again at his CARDS, this time letting Foster and
 Angel see: ACE OF HEARTS, TEN OF HEARTS, KING OF HEARTS,
 JACK OF HEARTS, and the last revealed, THREE OF CLUBS.

FOSTER
 Fuck!

Ahmad LAUGHS.

AHMAD
 What an excellent poker face, Dr.
 Einstein. Who's idea was it to get
 stoned, tonight?

Everyone looks at Ralph who GIGGLES.

AHMAD (CONT'D)
 I will give you an extra sixty seconds
 to get out, Ralph.

Ralph slaps his leg and LAUGHS.

Sag arranges his hand and looks at Foster who stares at the
 cards.

FOSTER

Gimme a second.

(whispering)

You don't need the queen. There're only thirteen hearts. You have four and he might have one, maybe two. That leaves seven, maybe eight, so about fifteen percent...

Ahmad CHUCKLES.

Angel, wearing a Mona Lisa smile, looks at Ahmad.

ANGEL

(whispering in Sag's other ear)

Go for it, Superman.

She bites his earlobe.

Sag slaps one card down.

SAG

One.

FOSTER

(screaming)

No! Wait!

(whining)

I haven't finished calculating...I'm stoned.

He turns around and sees Felicity glaring at him. He shrugs his shoulders. She slaps her thighs together.

Ahmad bursts out LAUGHING and hits his fist on the table making everything bounce.

Danny slides one card to Sag. Sag slides it in front of Angel.

Angel lifts up the corner and takes a peek. She looks at Sag. A tear drips down her cheek and her lip trembles. She flips it over. It's the QUEEN OF HEARTS.

She throws her arms around Sag and kisses him as he lays his cards down next to the queen.

Sag, the corners of his mouth upturned contentedly, looks at Ahmad who's staring at him, slit eyed.

SAG

Allahu akbar.

ANGEL

(whispering in Sag's
ear)

Right here on this table...right
now.

Sag leans back smiling, blissful, his eyes closed. He points
an index finger toward the ceiling.

SAG

First order of business: everyone...

(points to Angel)

...except you...

(makes a circular
motion with his wrist
and pointed finger)

...clear the room.

AHMAD

(to Danny, the dealer)

You're a dead man.

Danny smiles.

INT. SUPERMARKET - LATE NIGHT

Danny, with a silly, sleepy grin, picks out a beautiful
bouquet of flowers and places them in his basket. He looks
up and scans the room, still smiling sleepily. He's more
than a bit drunk.

He finds his way to the wine section, looking down each aisle
as he strolls. He selects a bottle of champagne and drops
it into the basket.

Still smiling he moves through the self check-out, pawing to
retrieve his change as he finishes.

EXT. SUPERMARKET PARKING LOT - A MOMENT LATER

Holding the bouquet of flowers and a bag with the champagne,
Danny drunkenly wobbles out of the store and slowly makes
his way toward his car.

As he approaches it and fumbles at the handle, a dark clad
figure appears and points a gun at him.

DANNY

(slurred)

What took you so long?

FADE OUT

THE SOUND OF TWO GUNSHOTS...