

LAUNDRY DAY

By
Randy
Mack

2nd Third revision 11/26/13

Armak Productions
PO Box 56307
New Orleans, LA
70156

randy@laundrydayfilm.com

1 **EXT. CITY STREET - NEW ORLEANS - AFTERNOON** 1

FOLLOW a young man-- call him THE KID-- trudging under the weight of an old battered duffel. The sun is setting.

At the corner is a bar with plastic flaps for a door.

2 **INT. CZECK'S BAR - CONTINUOUS** 2

A 24-hour dive bar/club/laundromat. Ancient black paint with battered tiled floors. An ancient wooden bar down one side. A couple of ANCIENT DAY DRINKERS at the bar.

FOLLOW as he crosses the room. Empty tables. A tiny RISER on which a BLUES BAND goes through the motions. The singer, DEE-- late 30s, tired-- consults a notebook. She doesn't look up.

The bartender, BART-- 30s, weathered, bored-- puts down a comic book and pokes a SLEEPING old man: OLD MAN DILLARD nods semi-coherently and pulls out a fistful of cash. Bart absently notes The Kid as he--

--passes through a doorway in back. A sign: SUDS N' DUDS--

3 **INT. LAUNDROMAT - CONTINUOUS** 3

4 washers, 4 dryers, coin-op. Soap dispenser on wall.

The Kid opens a washer. Pulls out a TURNIP. Huh? Tosses it aside, DUMPS in the duffel.

Our first good look: The Kid's young, a traveling kid, likely a runaway, maybe rode the rails here. Can't grow a beard. Fresh ink peeks over his collar.

JUMP CUTS: He disrobes. Turns his shirt inside-out, puts it back on. Everything else goes into a washer, except his pants, which he puts back on. Commando.

Removes a vial of patchouli oil, adds a few drops to the washer. Feeds in quarters from a ZIPLOCK FULL OF CHANGE.

4 **INT. CZECK'S BAR - A MINUTE LATER** 4

The Kid finds a stool at the bar.

He looks around and takes in the environment. It intimidates him. He squirms.

BART

This isn't a bus station, kid. You gonna get something?

KID

Uh, ok, sure. PBR?

The Kid fumbles in his pockets. Bart regards him.

BART

We have what's on tap and what's up there on the wall.

The Kid holds out an I.D. card.

KID

I'm legal.

Bart waves it away. Reaches into the cooler without looking.

BART

Let's make it easy on both of us. You get a... Amber. Four bucks.

KID

Oh, okay. Uh, hold on.

He pulls out the ziplock full of change--

BART

For the love of-- Ok, forget it, punk. The pieces of shit win. No one drink minimum for you today.

He walks away before the Kid can reply. The Kid sheepishly slouches down and faces the room.

He accidentally makes eye contact with a SCOWLING female gutterpunk, aka GUTTERFEMME, 21, tattoos & piercings, tank top under overalls. She isn't scowling at him, though: she's looking past him to the guy on his other side (ETHAN). The Kid quickly averts his eyes.

PAN TO: ETHAN looks up. Mid-20s with a wide open, appealing face. Skinny and earnest. Tattered second-hand army jacket. Soft flat cap. Sad starter moustache. He gives the Kid a nod.

ETHAN

Hey Bart, I'll take another Miller.

Bart GRUNTS and puts it in front of him.

As Bart turns around, Ethan hands the beer to the Kid.

ETHAN (cont'd)

Welcome to Czeck's, kid. First one's on the house.

KID

Thanks, man!

The Kid looks over as NATALEE storms in. 20s, not well taken care of, she's a street performer and looks it. Catholic-girl skirt, camisole over a sleeveless black-&-white striped shirt, tat of James Woods on bicep. Eye-shadow smeared. She's frazzled and full of tension.

She bee-lines to the bar. Nobody pays attention.

She tries to get Bart's attention, but her throat's dry, she only makes a RASPING SOUND. She swallows, composes herself.

NATALEE

Ummm... Bart? Hey, Bart?

Bart's at grill station. He's smoking. Turns around. Reacts with mild surprise at her and her state.

BART

Oh hey. Gimme a minute.

He turns back. Natalee leans across the bar.

NATALEE

(loud whisper/hiss)

Bart... Bart! We gotta talk, man...!

Bart waves her off without looking. The Kid is unnerved.

NATALEE (cont'd)

BART GODDAMMIT!

Bart turns and gives her a "WTF" shrug, spatula dangling.

ETHAN

Hey Natalee... What's up?

Natalee looks at him for the first time. Gives him a rote peck on the cheek. On stage, Dee's eyes flick over.

NATALEE

Hey Ethan. Now's a bad time.

She turns away. The Kid relaxes, sips his beer.

5 **INT. CZECK'S STAGE - SAME TIME** 5

On stage, Dee starts singing. She is mediocre, but her clothes are super-cool.

A couple GALS start dancing. One-- early 20s, shabby, cowboy hat and Mardi Gras beads-- is the TEXAN DANCER.

6 **INT. CZECK'S BAR - CONTINUOUS** 6

The Kid turns to watch the stage. He idly asks Ethan:

THE KID

So, like, whadda you guys usually do in a place like this?

THE BEER IS KNOCKED FROM HIS HAND BY SOMETHING FLYING BY HIM.

FREEZE: The Kid's face-- shocked. The glass-- mid-air. The beer-- erupting upwards. Gutterfemme-- a blur, face locked in a growl of determination.

SNAP INTO MOTION:

Gutterfemme LAUNCHES HERSELF at Ethan and sends him toppling off his stool. He HITS Old Man Dillard and all three hit the floor with a CRASH, Gutterfemme on top, slapping wildly. Natalee JUMPS out of the way. The beer SMASHES.

GUTTERFEMME

You fucking gypper!

Bart looks over his shoulder and double-takes, stunned. Cigarette dangles, forgotten, from his mouth.

7 **INT. CZECK'S STAGE - SAME TIME** 7

Dee fumbles a line of lyric. Stops singing, shocked. The band keeps playing. The Dancers stop and stare.

8 **INT. CZECK'S BAR - CONTINUOUS** 8

On the ground, Ethan tries to wrestle her off but she outweighs him and he's got no leverage.

ETHAN

It's a set up! The Werewalrus!

Old Man Dillard SLAPS and HOWLS. Natalee grabs Gutterfemme.

NATALEE

Hey get off him you fucking thief!

She tries to pull her off and SLIPS in the beer, falling onto them. The Gutterfemme PUNCHES her in the head. Natalee GRABS HER HAIR. A hand pushes against Natalee's face.

FREEZE on Natalee's smushed face and ZOOM IN slowly.

MATCH DISSOLVE TO:

9 **INT. BART'S APARTMENT - LIVING ROOM - EARLIER** 9

Natalee's sleeping face. Crumpled clothes for a pillow.

She's lying on a battered hide-a-bed sofa, under a black leather duster. Her BARE FEET stick out the bottom.

She STIRS, winces, smacks her lips. HER EYES OPEN. SITS UP and THROWS THE DUSTER OFF. She's only wearing bracelets, earrings, and a paper wristband from a club.

Now alert, she looks at herself with growing panic. She stands and PACES, chewing at her fingernails.

She finds her TALL BLACK LEATHER BOOTS. Picks them up, trying to figure something out. Looks out the window, then around at what's clearly a bachelor pad. Sees a CONDOM on the floor by the wall. Frowns.

She puts her boots on.

Now incongruously naked except for giant black shit-kickers, the tension flows out of her. DEEP BREATH. Rolls her head. Shakes her limbs, CLOMPS her heels. The panic is gone.

Cell phone. Autodials. While it rings she lights a butt she finds in an ashtray. Grabs clothes off floor and couch. Same ones as when we met her.

10 **INT. BART'S BATHROOM** 10

Puts toilet seat down and sits. Ashes in the sink. Drums her fingers on the phone anxiously.

NATALEE

Fucking pick up already, Bart...

She pees, hangs up, wipes, looks, REACTS. This time it takes a major breath and effort to remain calm. REDIALS.

11 **INT. BART'S KITCHEN** 11

Half-dressed now. Striped shirt, skirt. Pops open Advil bottle, shakes the last two in her mouth, leaves the bottle on the counter.

NATALEE

Fucking A, Bart, call me back
IMMEDIATELY. Not a fucking joke. I
gotta ask you bout last night.

Hangs up. Opens cabinet, removes lighter fluid, drops it and phone into a metal lunch pail. Snaps pail shut.

She grabs the bar of Ivory from the sink and puts it in her backpack.

12 **INT. BART'S LIVING ROOM** 12

Fully dressed. Opens a backpack with one shoulder strap and STUFFS ALL HER STUFF IN IT. Checks the room: almost empty now. Satisfied, she zips it and slings it over a shoulder.

13 **INT. BART'S KITCHEN** 13

Grabs the lunch pail. EXITS.

14 **EXT. CREOLE COTTAGE APARTMENT - CONTINUOUS** 14

She locks the door. Pause. Slips key under the door.

15 **EXT. STREET - NEW ORLEANS - DAY - CONTINUOUS** 15

Blinding sun. Natalee walks purposefully, phone to ear. Hears something. STOPS. Ducks into an alley between houses.

Now vulnerable, she leans her head against the wall and closes her eyes. Swallows. Adjusts phone.

NATALEE

(soft)

Hey Ethan... Please call as soon as
you get this. I'm... Something's
happened, I dunno what. I... Call me.

Closes the phone. She stays still, eyes closed, against the wall, in the cool shadows.

16 **EXT. FRENCHMEN STREET - DAY**

16

A nightclub district with bars and cafes. Natalee walks toward an empty lot, but there's a SKIFFLE BAND setting up there. The singer, AURA, calls out to her.

AURA

Sorry, hon! The first corner on Decatur is open, I think.

Natalee nods, resigned.

AURA (cont'd)

Hey Nat girl the NOPD's been chilling people 'bout permits. They took Two Quarters to OPP. Be on your toes.

NATALEE

What? He's harmless. Fuckers.

Nat waves thanks. Aura shrugs. Dee passes unseen on a bike.

17 **EXT. URSALINES PARK - DAY**

17

*

A MAGICIAN holds court and does card tricks. Natalee sighs and walks past. *

ANOTHER INTERSECTION

She turns the corner but a HUMAN STATUE is in the doorway arch that's the primo spot. She's got a small crowd throwing money. Nat huffs, turns around, and goes back.

18 **EXT. WASHINGTON SQUARE PARK - DAY**

18

On the edge of the park, Natalee removes A LONG BATON, the lunch pail, and a WASH CLOTH from her pack. Places them in a semi-circle around herself. *

Opens the lunch pail. Removes lipstick, applies it as she scans the park. Seeds the pail lid with cash. *

Natalee picks up the baton, pours lighter fluid on the ends, lights it, and starts TWIRLING. Some tourists stop to watch.

Nat spins it around her neck. The tourists APPLAUD. Money is put in the hat. More stop. Natalee offers a strained smile. She can't completely focus.

NATALEE

Hello good people... Welcome to the
uh... Big Easy, where anything can be
had for a price, and... the FUCKING
COPS, in the murder capital of
America, have nothing better to do
than fuck with artists!

Pissed, she throws the baton straight up, drops to a knee,
opens the wash cloth, and DOUSES the ends with it. The crowd
claps with confusion. They turn to see A COP (OFFICER
DOUVERT, 30s) coming up from behind.

They turn back to Natalee, but she's already halfway down the
block with her stuff. She disappears into an alley.

19

EXT. FRENCH QUARTER STREET - DAY

19

She emerges on another street walking quickly. Glances
around. Pulls out phone, autodials. Walks. Hangs up.

NATALEE

What the fuck, Bart.

20

INT/EXT. BARREL BOTTOM - DAY

20

A dive bar. Seen better days. Very old and dark. LUCKY the
door man-- lean, bald, tough-- leans on the facade.

LUCKY

Hey baby.

NATALEE

Oh god, listen dude, I'm not
interested.

LUCKY

But you told the whole bar I'm your
boyfriend!

NATALEE

To make them laugh, Lucky! Geez.

Lucky pouts. Nat enters.

21

INT. BARREL BOTTOM - CONTINUOUS

21

Black on black on black. Or maybe it's grey, impossible to
tell with the blacked-out windows and dim lighting. A
bartendrix in a corset, BEATRIX, is pleased to see Nat.

BEATRIX

Hey Nat!

NATALEE

Hey Beatrix. Wendy leave a check for me? I covered some shifts during Bayou Fest.

BEATRIX

(rummaging)

Not that I know of.

NATALEE

Fuck, it's been a month, I need that money.

BEATRIX

She's probably just drunk. I'll remind her.

NATALEE

You rock.

BEATRIX

(holds up a pill, pops it)

Ethan just dropped off something to help me get through this double.

NATALEE

Where'd he go, baby?

BEATRIX

Bar next door, I think.

NATALEE

Thanks, hon.

22 **INT. THE BAR NEXT DOOR**

22

Mostly empty. Big window onto the street. Nat enters.

NATALEE

Hey, you seen Ethan?

LAZY BARTENDER

(not looking up)

Courtyard.

*

23 **EXT. THE BAR NEXT DOOR - REAR COURTYARD**

23

Nat emerges onto a narrow poorly-lit back patio. It's empty.

NATALEE

Ethan...?

Ethan emerges from the Men's Room. He seems taller, tougher, better groomed, and distinctly cooler than in the opening scene. *We are seeing him through Natalee's eyes.*

She runs into his surprised arms, shedding her backpack and gear. He slides his hands down to her hips.

ETHAN

Hey... Hey... What's wrong? Let make you feel better.

He pulls a JOINT from a PILL BOTTLE from one pocket, sticks it between her lips, lights it. She inhales, closes her eyes.

NATALEE

Ahhh... Bart was out when I woke up, his stash was cashed, couldn't work without the po-po hassling me.

He starts nuzzling her neck, pulling her forward, towards the bathroom.

NATALEE (cont'd)

You know I'm Samson in these boots, right?

ETHAN

(muffled on her skin)
Delilah?

NATALEE

No, Samson. I think Bartmmph--

Ethan's put a full-on, open-mouthed kiss on her. After a beat, she returns it.

ETHAN

Enough about your boyfriend.

He grabs her ass, lifts her up. She puts a knee on his hip and he carries her into the bathroom.

NATALEE

Slow and gentle, baby...

The door SLAMS behind them.

24

INT. THE BAR NEXT DOOR - SOME TIME LATER

24

Ethan and Natalee go back into the bar. She nudges her bra strap. Ethan sits at the bar. She stays standing, nervous.

NATALEE

Guess I should go. Lesley wants to get a drink.

ETHAN

Okay.

NATALEE

Hey, uh, I think I need a favor...

ETHAN

(misunderstanding)

Sure.

He pulls half a joint from his pocket and slips it to her.

NATALEE

Oh. Uh, thanks, man.

She exits.

25

EXT. SIDEWALK CAFE - A LITTLE LATER

25

Natalee sits down next to LESLEY, 30s, wearing business attire. A tat sleeve peeks out from her cuffs.

LESLEY

Oh my god, dear, you don't look so good.

NATALEE

I don't know what the fuck is going on with my life anymore.

LESLEY

Tell me about it!

NATALEE

I... Lesley, in all the years we've been friends, what's the one thing you know about me?

LESLEY

(laughing)

Oh, I dunno... You never take those boots off?

NATALEE

(well-practiced)

Right! I work, 'rassal, fuck,
fight, drink, and dance in my
Natalee King Coles.

LESLEY

Yup yup. So you only take them off
for...?

NATALEE

I don't. I don't take them off.

She lights a cigarette.

LESLEY

You can't smoke here.

NATALEE

We're outside, ay-kay-ay, the
smoking section.

LESLEY

They signed a "smoke-free" pact.

Lesley shrugs and smiles. Natalee doesn't.

NATALEE

Fucking non-smoking sections. In
New Orleans! There should be one
place left in America where a grown-
ass man can do something bad for
herself.

LESLEY

Preach it, sister.

NATALEE

(abruptly)

There's a chance Bart raped me last
night.

LESLEY

(sitting up)

What! Don't joke about that.

NATALEE

I woke up with my boots off.

LESLEY

Holy shit, Natalee, that's not
evidence. What about physical
damage?

NATALEE

Some soreness. And spotting this morning. Dried.

Lesley slumps back, disturbed.

LESLEY

And? That's not enough.

NATALEE

You don't believe me?

LESLEY

You need proof before you ruin a guy's life! Don't be a Jeanette!

NATALEE

What--?! Jeanette really was raped!

LESLEY

C'mon, Nat. She owed him money, he got her fired, she got her gorillas at the bar to run him outta town.

Nat stands up slowly, picks up her backpack.

NATALEE

Lesley, I was there that night. She came to me.

She walks off.

LESLEY

Natalee! Don't be a drama queen!

The waitress arrives with their drinks. Lesley looks up and shrugs. Takes both drinks.

26

EXT. AROUND THE CORNER

26

Natalee turns the corner and slows her stride. Takes a deep breath. Dee passes on a bike. Neither notice the other.

Nat takes two balls from her pocket and juggles them in her left hand as she pulls out her phone.

NATALEE

Where the fuck is everybody when I need them?

Hits redial yet again and continues walking.

27

EXT. URSALINES PARK - A LITTLE LATER

27

*

The magician is gone. Natalee, finishing a po' boy, pumps her fist and quickly sets up. Seeds the hat with some bills.

NATALEE

Hellooooo good people of New Orleans...

*

*

*

DISSOLVE TO:

Nat spins her fire baton. Passers-by are more annoyed than enticed. Nat looks down at the pail and sees only her bills.

*

GutterFemme skulks up with 2 GREASY FRIENDS and a dog on a rope leash. The dog looks embarrassed.

GUTTERFEMME

Hey lady, that's pretty cool. Do you think you could help us with a few bucks for beer?

NATALEE

(not stopping)

You fucking kidding me? I'm working and you want charity for nothing?

GUTTERFEMME

(unfazed)

Can you help us get fucked up then?

NATALEE

Oh that's fucking perfect. Get out of here, yer scaring business away.

GUTTERFEMME

(looking in hat)

Some business.

NATALEE

If you got cash, go to the Bar Next Door and find Ethan. Just go away.

GUTTERFEMME

Okay. Jesus Christ.

Her pals leave. She lingers until Nat's in mid-trick, then STEALS THE MONEY from the pail.

*

Nat reacts but can't stop fast enough. They're halfway down the block.

NATALEE

Motherfucking gutterpunks!

She unleashes a HAIR-RAISING SCREAM. People in every direction scatter.

28 **EXT. FRENCHMEN STREET - MINUTES LATER**

28

Natalee marches up the street. Upset, overwhelmed. *

At the vacant lot, the skiffle band is on break, sitting on their instruments. Aura sees Nat and runs up, concerned.

NATALEE
(not stopping)
This isn't a good time, Aura.

AURA
What's wrong? You look like you need a friend.

NATALEE
A friend, a shower, and a gun.

AURA
Sister, if you're serious, I can hook you up.

She's serious. Natalee stops.

NATALEE
..With which?

29 **EXT. FRENCHMEN DELI - MINUTES LATER**

29

They sit on an overturned Times-Picayune box across from the vacant lot. Swing their legs and pass the half joint.

NATALEE
...So it's the boots. Not just the blood, or how my body feels. It's the fucking boots I believe. I'd never take them off before crashing out like that. The boots don't lie.

AURA
I believe you.

NATALEE
It's-- What?

AURA
I believe you. You need to do something about it.

NATALEE

Like go to the cops, say pretty
please and beg for a free rape kit?

AURA

Nah fuck the cops. Go to the
Dauphine Clinic.

NATALEE

Ugh I can't. And it wouldn't
matter.

AURA

You can't or you won't? Gotta get
it on record.

A homeless man with a cane, TWO QUARTERS GEORGE, walks up.

TWO QUARTERS GEORGE

Excuse me, ladies, do you have two
quarters I could--

AURA

Not now, George.

NATALEE

Not now George.

TWO QUARTERS GEORGE (cont'd)

Sorry ma'am.

The gals pause, realizing at the same time.

AURA

George, they said--

NATALEE

--you were in OPP?

TWO QUARTERS GEORGE

Nah, that was last week. Excuse me,
ladies.

He doffs his cap and moves along. Natalee turns back.

NATALEE

There's no physical evidence.

AURA

You don't know that until you're
examined.

NATALEE

It won't matter. I had sex with him
that afternoon.

AURA

Oh. Well you'll have to lie about that.

NATALEE

And I was drunk, and on X, and I didn't wake up.

AURA

Lie about that too. It's important.

NATALEE

Aura, I love you but you're a retard. This is, ya know, "he-said she-said" and there's no leg.

A car of DRUNK TRANNIES cruises by. They have Tollhouse cookies. The gals duck as COOKIES EXPLODE around them.

AURA

Then we get our own revenge on him.

NATALEE

No. I'm not even sure what happened.

AURA

You said you were sure.

NATALEE

I was sure until I talked to you.

AURA

Well I'm sure.

She pulls on her wallet chain. Instead of a wallet, dangerous-looking BRASS KNUCKLES swing out of her back pocket.

NATALEE

Put that away. I don't even know where Bart is.

(gets up)

Fine, I'll go to the stupid clinic.

30

EXT. DAUPHINE WOMENS CLINIC

30

A converted storefront. Wicker basket of condoms hangs by the door. A RED CROSS and a Christian cross over it.

Nat's approaching when she sees DEE, the singer from Czeck's band, walking in her direction. *Dee has the hair, makeup, and demeanor of an over-the-hill Jersey tramp: Nat's POV.*

NATALEE

Oh fuck.

Nowhere to turn or hide. Damn.

They cross paths in front of the clinic.

DEE

(smacking gum)

Ah hey. Lookit you.

NATALEE

(feigning surprise)

Oh! Hi, Dee.

They both do an awkward half-stopping, half-turning.

DEE

(smirking)

Earth to Nat...

NATALEE

Sorry. Just pondering the stuff
that men don't tell us.

DEE

Oh, I'm sure if it was really
important they'd tell us.

NATALEE

Dare to dream. Well, I gotta run.

DEE

(smirking)

Not going in?

NATALEE

Uh, what? No, I'm going to work.

DEE

Me too. Playing Czeck's on your
boyfriend's shift later.

NATALEE

(Eureka!)

That's right! He follows Freddy on
Wednesdays.

DEE

(winking)

You're welcome.

She grabs a handful of condoms from the basket and saunters off. Nat is relieved. She turns back, but Dee is there.

But Dee suddenly TURNS BACK. Nat hesitates. Another awkward moment, but both decide to reverse direction. As they pass:

NATALEE
Forgot something.

DEE
Want a sandwich.

31

EXT. FRENCHMEN STREET - DUSK

31

*

Aura is leaving the Deli with a soda when Natalee walks up.

NATALEE
Fuck it. His shift at Czeck's
begins soon. I'll meet him there.

AURA
Oh goody!

Aura pulls her chain and the brass knuckles re-appear. Then she pulls on the other end of it, and a SWITCHBLADE emerges.

NATALEE
(wagging finger)
No violence!

Aura gives her a puppy-dog face.

NATALEE (cont'd)
..Yet.

Aura smiles and puts the knife away. Nat isn't having as much fun.

NATALEE (cont'd)
Dee's band is playing. So at least
there's that.

AURA
She's cool but what she's doing is
wrong.

NATALEE
No, I know, Bart explained, I said
it was okay. It's Ethan that's
wrong for cheating on her.

AURA
She's just using him cuz he's a
dealer.

NATALEE
Some dealer.
(they chuckle)
At least he's cute.

Bart glances back.

BART
Oh hey. Gimme a minute.

He moves over to the cooler, starts stacking.

NATALEE
Bart... I gotta talk to you... Bart! We
gotta talk!

Bart waves her off. Natalee frowns.

NATALEE (cont'd)
BART GODDAMMIT!

Without turning around Bart gives her an impatient shrug.

ETHAN (O.S.)
Hey Nat. What're you doing here?

Natalee gives him a rote peck on the cheek.

NATALEE
Hey Ethan. I could ask you the same
thing, but now's a bad time.

She looks back at the entrance. Makes a decision. Pulls out her phone, starts to dial.

FREEZE FRAME: Natalee frowns at her phone, holding a button down. Seated beside her, Ethan thinks hard. The Kid is being clipped from behind by a charging Gutterfemme.

SNAP INTO MOTION:

GUTTERFEMME
You gypping motherfucker!

WHAM! Ethan is tackled to the floor.

ETHAN
The werewalrus! It's a set up!

Old Man Dillard slaps away. Natalee looks down and recognizes the Gutterfemme.

NATALEE
Hey! Get off him you goddamn thief!

She gets one hand on the Gutterfemme but slips in the beer, falling on the pile. The Gutterfemme PUNCHES her in the head. Natalee GRABS HER HAIR. Her face is smooshed by a hand.

Underneath them, a panicky Ethan tries to wiggle out. Old Man Dillard HOWLS under him. On stage, Dee stares, frozen.

OLD MAN DILLARD
Help! Gutterpunks!

The Kid is gape-mouthed in shock. His hand hangs in the air, cupping a beer that's not there. The two Dancers come over, DELIGHTED at the spectacle.

TEXAN DANCER
Don't worry, kid, as long as Bart
is the sheriff here, you're safe.

As if on cue, Bart SLAMS HIS TOWEL on the bar.

BART
DAMMIT! NOT ON MY WATCH, PEOPLE!

He PULLS OUT A BASEBALL BAT. He regards the pile of people, then puts the bat away.

BART (cont'd)
LAST CHANCE. I DON'T GET PAID
ENOUGH TO WIPE YOUR DUMB ASSES.

He leans down and grabs the Gutterfemme's jacket with both hands. But he pauses-- he's face to face with Ethan.

BART (cont'd)
(low, snarling)
Don't think I'm going to help your
skinny ass, punk.

Ethan is shocked. FREEZE on his face and ZOOM IN..

MATCH DISSOLVE TO:

34 **INT. ETHAN'S APARTMENT - LIVING ROOM - EARLIER** 34 *

Ethan sleeping. A cat walks over his head.

ETHAN
...Mmreh... Oreo, go away.

Ethan sits up. Rubs his eye with one hand and grabs a BONG with the other. He's on a couch. A cat laps at a bowl of old cereal milk on the floor. *
* *

35 **ETHAN'S HALLWAY** 35 *

Ethan pulls on the bong. Puts on his soft flat cap. *

He KNOCKS on a door with a sign "Mad Scientist at work! KEEP OUT!"

ETHAN

Boba! Hey, Bobes! Get up, Bobesy, today's the big day! I gotta that deal going, so I gotta get into my room.

*
*
*

No reply. He KNOCKS some more.

*

BOBA (O.S.)

Duuuuude... we're not done in here man. That bluebell diesel knocked us tits up.

*
*
*

ETHAN

Good shit, right?

*

BOBA (O.S.)

Nah dude I'm sick and shit. Flipped my turtle right the fuck over. Get me some groceries man. And leave the good shit by the door.

*
*
*

ETHAN

Oh. Uh, okay. I'll just--

*

BOBA (O.S.)

Add it to my tab, bro.

Ethan nods. Per usual. Puts a baggie by the door. Notices his shirt is on backwards, and turns it around.

*

36 **LIVING ROOM**

36 *

He sits down with a box of Lucky Charms. Picks up the old bowl on the floor, shoos the cat away, and pours cereal in it. Eats.

*
*
*

Forgotten on the table, his phone flicks from 2:39pm to 2:40pm. It BUZZES.

*

INSERT: TEXT MESSAGE: "Dee: ZIPPERS!"

*

He glances at it, unperturbed. Goes back to reading the box.

On the table by the phone is a woman's fascinator hat.

*

37 **EXT. CREOLE COTTAGE - FRONT - DAY**

37

Ethan unlatches a gate and enters an overgrown path.

38

EXT. CREOLE COTTAGE BACKYARD

38

Two hippies lounge in rusty lawn chairs by a radio.

ETHAN

Karl, Kylie. Sup dawgs.

KYLIE

(getting up)

My man Ethan.

They do the two-slap hippie shake.

KYLIE (cont'd)

(sitting down again)

We smoked that whole O-Z listening
to O-Z this weekend.

Everybody laughs. Ethan produces some baggies.

ETHAN

Right on. Well I got new blueberry
sour diesel. And chocolope chronic.
And if you have a reason to
celebrate, Dutch Mountain Kind.

KYLIE

Dutch Mountain...?

ETHAN

Hybrid of Mount Cook and Dutch
Dragon. Sort of an up but not too,
with a mellow sorta
(high whistle)
I got this super-shwag because I'm
doing a big-ass deal with Paley
today.

The guys stop in shock. Unlit joint hangs from Karl's mouth.

KYLIE

Woah. Brah so I hope you got yer
shit together cuz Paley don't play.

ETHAN

He's gonna hook me up with the
freshest west coast and I'll
distribute for him in the triangle.

KYLIE

I knew this guy, worked at DOA with Big Mike, Mike's cousin did a deal with Paley and this other guy and it went bad and that other guy just straight up disappeared.

ETHAN

This is career-making, man. Get me a promotion. Going upstairs.

KYLIE

Damn dude, you all serious and shit. Career path. Nice.

Ethan does a goofy but charming pantomime of adjusting his tie and smoothing his hair. Kylie looks at his joint.

KYLIE (cont'd)

This is the blue, right? This tastes like, uh, brickweed, man.

ETHAN

That's what I smoke myself.

KYLIE

Ya sure? Your last batch was so weak we're re-upping just to stay high.

ETHAN

I swear, bro. This is my home brew.

KYLIE

(grabs two baggies)
Okay, man. 2 eighths.

ETHAN

That'll be, uh, 105, gentleman.

KYLIE

Don't forget, last time we had less than the total. But you had that extra jay and I was short, and Karl had that twenty. So we were gonna square up next time.

Kylie takes some cash from Karl, combines it with his own, and presses it into Ethan's hand.

KYLIE (cont'd)

Here ya go, bro. One fifteen.
(takes, pauses)
And... cough... the change cough... brah?

ETHAN

Right!

Ethan peels off a twenty, pauses uncertainly. Kylie takes it.

KYLIE

(reclining)

See ya, bro.

Ethan stands awkwardly. They ignore him. He looks at the wad of cash, pockets it, and leaves.

39

INT/EXT. CAFE NEGRECT - SOON AFTER

39

Spacious but poorly maintained. It hasn't opened yet.

Ethan enters. Behind the bar, WILLOW sets down a couple cases of beer with a SLAM. She's a tall, angry, beanpole.

WILLOW

Goddamn it's about time!

ETHAN

Hi, Willow!

WILLOW

I'm carrying cases myself when I should be counting the drawer!

ETHAN

I'm sorry, I'll get the rest.

WILLOW

You're such a tool. Fucking christ.

Ethan isn't bothered, seems to think she's kidding. He walks to the pile of cases, grabs a couple.

ETHAN

I've got this major deal with--

WILLOW

Holy shit! Did I ask you to blather at me?

He starts hauling the beer into the coolers.

WILLOW (cont'd)

Not so fast. I want a quarter of your finest.

Ethan puts down a case, rummages pockets, produces a baggie.

ETHAN

That's--

WILLOW

(snatching the baggie)
I'm docking you 15 minutes. I'll
take the rest out of your tips.

ETHAN

(struggling)
Er, don't you mean, take it out of
your tips?

WILLOW

(snaps)
Okay that's it, you're finished for
the day! Go home!

ETHAN

What?! For how long?

WILLOW

Until I change my mind.

She goes back to the register. Ethan puts the case in the cooler and slinks away.

40 **EXT. CAFE NEGRECT** 40

Ethan sheepishly exits. Looks around. Sighs.

He digs in his pockets. Can't find what he wants. Frowns.

41 **INT. ETHAN'S APARTMENT** 41

He enters, looks around. Goes into the kitchen. His cell is still on the counter. He grabs it.

"4 NEW MESSAGES FROM DEE."

He grabs a bong and does a hit, standing at the counter by the woman's fascinator hat.

42 **INT/EXT. BARREL BOTTOM - LOWER DECATUR STREET** 42

He walks along. His belly rumbles. He rubs it.

LUCKY (O.S.)

Yo candyman!

Ethan looks up. LUCKY waves.

*

ETHAN

Hey Lucky dawg what up.

Quick 2-beat handshake.

LUCKY

Trix needs you inside.

Lucky winks. Ethan nods. Cool. That means business.

*

43

INT. BARREL BOTTOM

43

Ethan huddles with Bartendrix at the end of the bar.

ETHAN

This is perfect pick-me up. Tastes like Booberry cereal.

BEATRIX

No way. I used to get boxes of that shit shipped to me from Portland.

She sniffs the bag.

Beatrix (cont'd)

Hmm, I don't smell it, but I gotta try it. Also, I need a coupla pills to keep me alert through this shift.

ETHAN

I think I got something for that. Oh yeah, here ya go.

He finds some pills. She hands over some cash.

44

EXT. LOWER DECATUR - DAY - SOON AFTER

44

Ethan walks and whistles the horn line to some hippie classic of the public domain.

STOVEY (O.S.)

Yo Eat-man!

Ethan turns. STOVEY-- a 250lb, 6'4" young black man-- waves from the doorway of a closed restaurant.

ETHAN

Ayy Stovey, what up bro.

They exchange a different handshake, one with 4 beats that ends with a snap. Ethan steps into the shade with him.

STOVEY

Mmm mmm, I hear you got the cannibal kush, son.

ETHAN

That's the tip of the iceberg. Choco-chronic, blue diesel, Himalayan arugula.

STOVEY

Well hell, let's do a pu-pu platter. An eighth of each.

Ethan fumbles with baggies in his pockets.

Stovey (cont'd)

So, yo, straight up, you got business with Paley?

ETHAN

Sure do. He got the hookup, I got the connects.

Stovey rolls his eyes and tries to be avuncular.

STOVEY

You're a good kid, Ethan, ya work hard and all, but don't be messing around upstairs. Paley don't play.

ETHAN

Yeah, but it's my step up.

STOVEY

People get hurt. You oughta be in college or something. What you wanna do with your life?

ETHAN

This. Right now, doing what I'm doing...

(hands baggies to him)

...is the thing that makes me happy. It's my calling. ...Oh, and this is 90 bucks.

STOVEY

That's your calling, 90 bucks?

ETHAN

I, just want my piece. Prove myself, go full-time, move up to powder.

[more]

ETHAN (cont'd)
Comfortable cash, a good woman,
respect. Like what you got with
music.

STOVEY
My bass might, at the worst, get me
puked on. You could end up feeding
catfish. Lookit, your baggies ain't
even labeled.

ETHAN
You can sorta tell by the color.
That's the choco.

STOVEY
(opens and sniffs one)
Smells like schwag.

ETHAN
Aw, it's okay. Not fragrant this
season.

Stovey pulls out a sticker sheet of little fleur-de-lises. He sticks one on the shwag and another on an identical bag.

He gives Ethan the stickers and a \$100 bill. Ethan takes them and hands him back a \$20.

STOVEY
I owe ya ten. Why not give me ten
bucks of the Maui and call it even?

ETHAN
Good idea. Here.

STOVEY
No, Ethan, I tricked you, Gotta be
on your toes, brah. You don't give
me anything if I owe you.

ETHAN
(laughing)
Right! Nice one. You had me going.

He doesn't get it. Stovey is frustrated. Hands him a ten.

STOVEY
Eths, how much powder fits in this
baggie?

ETHAN
(squinting)
Uh. An eighth? No, a sixteenth.

STOVEY

Powder's in METRIC, Ethan. You just ain't a details man, and details are the devil. I knew my old lady was fooling around with her manager cuz she bitched about little details of him. When people are intimate, details get under the skin, become huge.

ETHAN

It's a big opportunity, man. Don't jinx it with negativity.

He winks, smiles. Stovey is concerned but shrugs.

ZZZRT-- Ethan looks down at his phone.

TEXT MESSAGE: "DEE: FASCN8R! ZIPPERZ!"

Ethan still has no idea what this means.

45

INT. THE BAR NEXT DOOR

45

Ethan messily finishes a slice of honey-glazed Hawaiian. Sips a beer. His stomach makes an UNHAPPY NOISE.

ETHAN

Oh shit.

LAZY BARTENDER

What?

ETHAN

I'm lactose intolerant.

He jumps off the stool in a panic. Bartender throws him a roll of paper towels.

LAZY BARTENDER

No tee-pee back there.

Ethan uses the roll to salute with gratitude and runs out to the back courtyard.

46

EXT. BAR NEXT DOOR COURTYARD - SOON AFTER

46

Ethan emerges, sweaty and pale, from the Men's Room, tucking his shirt in.

NATALEE (O.S.)

Ethan...?

Ethan looks up. Natalee is older, sadder, and more burnt-out-looking. We're seeing her through Ethan's eyes.

ETHAN

Oh hey. Is something wrong?

She runs into his arms, embracing him. Surprised, he hugs her back, awkwardly patting her back.

ETHAN (cont'd)

Hey... Hey... You okay? Wanna toke?

He fumbles out bags of weed from various pockets. A joint falls to the ground. He grabs at it.

NATALEE

This day is already so fucking fucked!

ETHAN

Here, mellow out, Nat.

He sticks the joint between her lips, lights it. She inhales, closes her eyes.

NATALEE

Ahhh... Bart was out when I woke up, then I couldn't find a spot to work without the po-po hassling me.

(hands joint back)

This shit is schwag, man.

He takes it back.

NATALEE (cont'd)

So, uh... Wanna fuck?

She steps up, kisses him, accidentally stepping on his foot.

ETHAN

Ow!

NATALEE

Don't fucking touch my boots! You know how I feel about my boots!

The storm passes. She smirks and pushes him into the Men's Room.

Ethan and Natalee go back into the bar. Ethan is ruffled but unperturbed. Natalee looks annoyed.

NATALEE

Ok well I gotta go. Aura and I are gonna go fuck shit up.

ETHAN

Okay.

NATALEE

Well, gimme the rest, already.

He pulls the rest of the joint from his pocket and slips it to her. She exits. Ethan watches her, confused and concerned.

His phone buzzes. TEXT MESSAGE: "DEE: FASSIN8 4 ZIPPRS!?!". He starts to type a response when someone TAPS his shoulder. He turns-- it's the GUTTERFEMME.

LAZY BARTENDER

Hey, no dogs! Wait outside.

*

He points at the door where her posse is huddled in the doorway. They slink out.

GUTTERFEMME

Can I talk to you outside real quick?

48 **EXT. THE BAR NEXT DOOR - MOMENTS LATER**

48

In a doorway, in plain view of traffic and passersby, Gutterfemme holds out some cash. Ethan holds out a few bags of weed. She takes the one with a fleur-de-lis sticker on it and hands over the cash.

49 **EXT. A&Z CONVENIENCE STORE - LOWER DECATUR**

49

Ethan exits, chomping a Hubig's pie. Two Quarters George walks by and stops.

TWO QUARTERS GEORGE

Say by any chance do you have two quarters?

Ethan gives him a dollar bill. George scowls. Drops it.

*

DEE (O.S.)

George! You know better.

*

*

Dee pulls up on a bicycle, skids to a semi-controlled stop. Shakes her hair out. ROCK STAR. *More glamorous than usual.*

*

*

TWO QUARTERS GEORGE

Sorry, ma'am.

He picks up the dollar and leaves. *

DEE

Ethan, I've been looking all over for you!

Ethan MUMBLES incoherently, mouth full of pie.

DEE (cont'd)

Did you get my messages? I need my fascinators hat because the producer from the Squirrel Nut Zippers is coming to my gig tonight to scout me for their next album. *

ETHAN *

No, no, sorry. You gotta gig tonight or something?

DEE

I told you, we're covering for Duane. Bart's shift. That guy is a damn pain.

ETHAN

I thought you liked Bart.

DEE

Maybe once upon a time. He's got this way of like, smiling, but, ya know, not smiling, that's just so frickin' irritating.

ETHAN

Huh.

DEE

Don't worry about it. It's just, ya know, the little details you pick up on with people you work with.

ETHAN

Huh.

Gears are slowly starting to turn in Ethan's head.

DEE

Wow, a real Oscar Wilde.

ETHAN

Guess what? I have a meeting with Paley.

DEE

Oh baby, I'm sure you'll do great. Just don't go high. *

ETHAN

Don't worry, I haven't smoked enough yet to be high.

DEE

If he asks if you use the stuff, tell him you feel it's important for a salesman to appreciate the product as a customer too. That's what I told Walgreens when they fired me for stealing cosmetics. *

ETHAN

Oo that's good.

She kisses him on the cheek. Gets on bike. *

DEE

Come by Czeck's for my show.

ETHAN

Wouldn't miss it.

DEE

Your pie made me hungry. I'm going to Verti Mart.

She rides off.

50

EXT. CZECK'S - SOON AFTER

50

Ethan stands on the corner, nervous. He takes the joint from his pocket, looks around, puts it back. Chews his nails.

A canary yellow PEDICAB pulls up in front of him. In the back is a well-groomed heavy-set man, 50s, MR GOAT, sipping a pink daiquiri. A lapdog sits next to him.

MR GOAT

You Ethan?

He has a deep voice and a minor lisp. He doesn't get out.

ETHAN

You... You Paley?

MR GOAT

Hell no. I'm Mr Goat. Get in.

Ethan wasn't expecting that. He looks at the driver--
tracksuit, 20s, wiggery (MATT)-- who just shrugs. Ethan gets
in, sits backwards facing Goat.

51

EXT. TRAVELLING THROUGH STREETS

51

With a couple grunts from the Driver, they pull into traffic
and ride through the French Quarter.

ETHAN

This is a real honor. Who are you?

MR GOAT

I speak for Paley is all you need
to know. He likes you, kid, but we
do have concerns.

ETHAN

I'm ready to step up. He'll be
impressed.

MR GOAT

Worry about impressing me right
now.

ETHAN

Sorry.

MR GOAT

Don't say sorry.

ETHAN

Sorry, I'll stop. Oops, sorry.

Mr Goat just stares. He's not paid enough for this.

MR GOAT

We ain't a hunnert percent sure yer
ready to "step up" as you say.

ETHAN

I'm not?

MR GOAT

How much have you moved today?

ETHAN

About... uh yeah, about two ounces.

MR GOAT

And how much have you smoked?

ETHAN

Oh, uh... Dunno.

MR GOAT

We get nervous when the salesman
smokes more than the customers.

ETHAN

I think it's important to talk
about the product as a fan--

DRIVER (O.S.)

WOAH!

K-THUNK. The pedicab RUNS OVER SOMETHING and the left side
POPS INTO THE AIR. Expressionless, Mr Goat watches half his
daiquiri go flying into the street.

VOICE (O.S.)

OW!

The cab lands with a stuttering CRASH. Ethan, facing
backwards, sees that they've just run over someone who was
thrown from a freak bicycle/pedicab/mule carriage accident.
Before he can react--

MR GOAT

Right. Anyway. So here's what's
gonna happen. I'm gonna hook you up
with about a batch of stuff.

ETHAN

(swallowing)

I want powder.

Mr Goat raises his eyebrows.

MR GOAT

Schwag, chronic, powder, potpourri,
you get what we decide. And you
sell it. And you bring us 3 grand.

ETHAN

(looking into street)

That's a cool bike.

MR GOAT

Focus.

ETHAN

No prob. Three grand. All over it.

MR GOAT

...In 24 hours. I'll meet you at the same corner tomorrow.

ETHAN

One day? Ohhhh. Shit. Okay.

A51 **EXT. CZECK'S - LATE AFTERNOON**

A51 *

The pedicab pulls up. They're in front of Czeck's again.

MR GOAT

Meeting's over. We'll get the stuff to you.

ETHAN

You need my address?

GOAT

We got a guy, we call 'im the Werewalrus, he takes care of shipping and receiving. Stay in the bar. He'll give you this.

He hands Ethan a playing card: the King of Hearts.

ETHAN

Great! I won't let you down.

Mr Goat just stares at him. Ethan swallows and exits the pedicab. Watches it roll away.

*

52 **INT. CZECK'S**

52

Ethan enters. Bart is out from behind the bar, has a wiry drunk, FREDDY (50s), in a bearhug.

BART

Dammit get the fuck outta here!

He shoves Freddy hard toward the door. Ethan jumps out of his way. *Bart is much better groomed than his prior appearances.*

FREDDY

Fuck you! I'm going to the bar next door!

(drunkenly switches gears)

Oh hey Ethan, how's business?

ETHAN

Howdy, Mr Freddy.

Bart makes like he's going to chase. Freddy flees.

ETHAN (cont'd)
Everything okay, Bart?

BART
Yeahyeah. Just a little trouble
with a co-worker.

Bart goes back to work. Ethan notes the empty stage as he
heads to the bar.

53 **INT. CZECK'S STAGE - LATER** 53

Dee sets up with the band. She scratches her hatless head.

54 **INT. CZECK'S BAR - SAME TIME** 54

Ethan talks happily with Old Man Dillard. Buys him a beer.
Checks the time on his cell phone.

FREDDY (O.S.)
You waiting for somebody?

Freddy sits down next to him at the bar.

ETHAN
Is that going to be cool with Bart?

Bart comes over and leans in close. His scowl is even grimmer
than usual. Ethan FLINCHES but Freddy meets his eye.

FREDDY
Bart.

BART
Freddy. Listen you know the rules
when it's my bar.

FREDDY
I know. Dint mean nothing by it.

BART
Okay. My rules, my bar.
(they shake hands)
Jamie?

FREDDY
Thanks.

Bart pours two shots. They shoot them. Bart bangs the
shotglass twice on the bar and goes away.

ETHAN

(sotto voce, but proud)
Paley, I mean Mr Goat, said they'll
bring me something here.

Freddy double-takes. Strokes his grey stubble.

FREDDY

Shit, kid. Movin' on up.

ETHAN

Damn skippy. Gotta move 3 grand of
whatever they bring me by tomorrow.

He grins. Freddy considers him with concern.

FREDDY

Ethan... Phew. You on it?

ETHAN

It's, well, it's slightly more than
my usual day, but I'm gonna hustle.

FREDDY

Remember Buffa's?

ETHAN

Sure. You were 86'd and my shift
manager, at the same time.

FREDDY

Let's pretend that job was dealing,
and you're cashing out for the
night.

(grabs a napkin)

First list the sales.

ETHAN

Oh, like you're still my manager?
Ok. First there was Karl and Kylie.

FREDDY

Not your roommate?

ETHAN

Oh. Uh. Yeah. Sort of. On credit.

Freddy writes on the napkin.

MATCH DISSOLVE TO:

The napkin now has a list of people, with lots of question
marks, arrows, cross-outs, and the word "credit" all over.

FREDDY

So that's everyone. At 40 an eighth.

(new napkin)

Now let's reconcile the drawer.
Empty your pockets.

Ethan digs. Wads of loose cash fall out of every one.

ETHAN

Uh.

He makes a pile of bills and starts to organize them. Freddy stops him. Holds up a napkin that says "\$1600"

FREDDY

Unless you keep Benjamins wadded up like jizz rags, you're not even close. Maybe half at best.

ETHAN

(shaken)

I... uh... um...

BART

(calling)

Hey put your cash away. What're you, stupid?

Ethan puts the money back in his pockets by the fistful.

FREDDY

What's really going on, Ethan?

ETHAN

I, I've got a reputation. This is my shot.

FREDDY

This is going to get you shot. How do you know they're not setting you up? The guy could bring you bad shit. Or stolen shit. Or tell the other dealers. Or bring real shit but be a narc.

Ethan hadn't considered this.

FREDDY (cont'd)

I'm not saying it's so. Let's say you're right. What happens if it's all on the level, and you don't have 3 grand tomorrow night?

Ethan goes pale. Drinks with a trembling hand.

ETHAN
"Paley don't play."

FREDDY
Dang straight.

ETHAN
Fuck fuck fuck!

Bart comes over.

BART
What the fuck's the matter with you
two?

ETHAN
I have 24 hours to move three
thousand dollars worth of schwag.

BART
(whatever)
Well, you're in the right city.

He walks off. Ethan pulls a deep breath.

ETHAN
I don't think he likes me.

FREDDY
He may be a dick, but if some
serious shit goes down in here,
he's your closest cop.

Freddy claps him on the back, gets up, and leaves.

Ethan sits in his seat, shaking. The band makes a NOISE.

DEE (O.S.)
Hey you came to my show?

Ethan JUMPS in his seat. Dee gestures toward the back.

55

INT. CZECK'S BACK OFFICE - MINUTES LATER

55

*

Dee pulls the door closed. Ethan goes to kiss her, she gently
pushes him back. He offers a joint.

DEE
I can't, I might be pregnant. If
it's yours, I might wanna keep it.
[more]

DEE (cont'd)
My career's dead, might as well
start a family, right?

ETHAN

"If"...?

DEE

Point is, I don't have to do
anything. But if you don't wanna
keep it, I need to borrow \$200
bucks for the clinic.

ETHAN

I have 24 hours to raise three
grand for Paley or I'm gonna wash
up on the Riverwalk in the morning.

DEE

Jesus. Really? Okay, never mind.
I'm sure the band'll spot me.

She checks her hair, makeup in a mirror. Ethan slinks out. *
She pulls out her necklace, does a bump.

56

INT. CZECK'S BAR - A LITTLE LATER

56

The band plays. At the bar, ETHAN looks up as the Kid pulls
out a bag of change. He doesn't notice Gutterfemme.

BART

For the love of... Forget it, punk.
You win. No one drink minimum for
you today.

Ethan gives the Kid a nod, gestures at Bart.

ETHAN

Hey Bart, I'll take another Miller.

Bart GRUNTS and pours. Ethan hands the beer to a surprised
Kid. Behind them, Dee begins to sing.

ETHAN (cont'd)

Welcome to Czeck's, kid. First
one's on the house.

KID

Thank you, sir!

NATALEE storms in. Bee-lines to the bar. Tries to get Bart's
attention. Ethan tries to get her attention. Too subtle.

NATALEE

Ummm... Bart? Hey, Bart?

Natalee leans across the divider. Ethan leans toward her.

NATALEE (cont'd)

(whisper/hiss)

Bart... We gotta talk... Bart!

Bart waves her off. Ethan clears his throat.

NATALEE (cont'd)

BART GODDAMMIT!

Bart turns and gives her a "WTF" shrug, spatula dangling.

ETHAN

(too casual)

Hey Natalee... What's up?

Natalee sees him, pecks his cheek distractedly.

NATALEE

Hey Ethan. Now's a bad time.

Ethan looks from Bart to Nat and back. Hmmm. Wheels turning.

FREEZE FRAME: Ethan's pondering face. Behind him, the Kid's glass is in mid-air, beer erupting upwards, as the GutterFemme slams past him.

SNAP INTO MOTION:

Gutterfemme SMASHES INTO Ethan and takes him down. He HITS Old Man Dillard and they hit the floor. The Kid's glass SMASHES on the floor and sends beer all over them.

GUTTERFEMME

You cheap fucking sonuvabitch
lowlife scammer!

ETHAN

--the fuck--!!

Ethan holds up his arms to protect his face from her slapping hands. From the floor, he hears Dee STUTTER AND STOP SINGING.

Half under him, Old Man Dillard SLAPS at both of them.

NATALEE (O.S.)

Hey! Get off him you fucking thief!
Ahhh--!

With a THUD Natalee lands on him and the Gutterfemme. Ethan looks at her-- the Gutterfemme smooshes her face with a hand.

BART (O.S.)
DAMMIT! NOT ON MY WATCH PEOPLE!

Ethan looks up to see a pissed-off Bart come around the bar.

BART (cont'd)
LAST CHANCE. I DON'T GET PAID
ENOUGH TO WIPE YOUR DUMB ASSES.

Suddenly Bart is on a knee and snarling in Ethan's face.

BART (cont'd)
Don't think I'm going to help your
skinny ass, punk.

WHACK! Bart is clocked upside the cranium with a bar stool. Ethan turns his head to see where it came from.

It's DEE. She drops the bar stool in shock... CRASH. Her hand rises to her mouth. DEE IS TACKLED FROM BEHIND BY THE OTHER DANCER.

Old Man Dillard squirts out from under the pile as Dee and The Dancer land on the pile of fighting humanity.

CLOSE ON: Dee's panicked face.

MATCH DISSOLVE:

57

INT. DEE'S BEDROOM - THAT MORNING

57

Dee sleeps. Opens her eyes. Frowns. Rolls over. The other side of the bed is empty.

She sits up, groggy, mumbling--

DEE
...Bart? Can we talk?

She lies back down. Throws her arm over empty place next to her. Snores.

LATER

Dee wakes. Bart is sleeping beside her. She puts a leg over him. He rolls over.

LATER

Dee wakes. Bart is gone again. She rolls over and stares at something under her dresser-- an unopened bag with "Walgreens" on the side.

58 **INT. DEE'S BATHROOM**

58

Dee pees, one hand between her legs. Pulls out a pregnancy stick. Bad news.

DEE

Gahdammit. Be wrong, be wrong, be wrong.

She throws the stick at the trash.

59 **INT. DEE'S BEDROOM**

59

Dee sits at a wobbly card table in front of a worn laptop. She reads ReverbNation.com: DEE LISHIZ AND THE WHOLE GLORIES

A graph: "Fan activity: DOWN 80% over last 6 months"

She closes the window with a GRUNT. Behind it is an ad for the show AMERICA'S X-TALENT. "Coming to New Orleans!"

DEE

Pfft. Losers.

She closes that window. Behind it is Pitchfork.com. An ad: "Alt-Country Divas Dress for Success!" Hmmm.

CHIMES. She opens her email. From "Czeck's Booking"... Subject: "Last minute: Can you play tonight in Duane's slot?"

DEE (cont'd)

Oh- My- GOD! She's got some nerve.

Dee closes the laptop. Gets up. Clears throat.

DEE (cont'd)

(running scales)

LalalaLALALALA!

(opens closet)

Never playing that shit-hole again.

(scales)

LALALALalalalala...!

60 INT. DEE'S LIVING ROOM

60

In the mirror, she examines her face. Slowly turns her head side to side while methodically distorting her face.

61 INT. DEE'S KITCHEN - SOON AFTER

61

Unlike her nondescript bedroom, her kitchen is a bourgeois paradise. Knitted pot-holders and doilies, a breadmaker, exotic cast-iron pans on the walls, a wine rack.

Dee enters and opens the fridge. It's empty but for condiments and beverages.

DEE

Well, poop a doop. Eating out again today I guess.

Her iPhone's alarm RINGS. She looks at the oven's clock.

DEE (cont'd)

Oh oh oh! Gotta go gotta go!

She throw open a kitchen cabinet to reveal not dishes but BOXES OF CDs. Her CDs. Hundreds of unsold copies.

She grabs 2 of each, stuffs them in her purse.

She opens a drawer: stacks of bumper stickers on top of silverware. She grabs some, stuffs em in her purse too.

A FRANTIC COMMOTION AT THE DOOR-- Bart bursts into the room. He's covered in FLOUR and is more than a little pissed off.

DEE (cont'd)

Bart! What the heck?! Where were you this morning?

He passes her without a word. She tries to stop him and gets flour on her arm.

DEE (cont'd)

Dammit, I'm late for O-Z! What's going on?

BART (O.S.)

Showering!

DEE

You left a mess everywhere!

She wipes her arm on a doily. Gets an idea.

Opens another drawer, full of jewelry. Pulls out a necklace, puts it on. The medallion opens, and she does a bump of cocaine out of it. That's more like it!

SMASH CUT TO:

62 **EXT. FRENCH QUARTER - DAY**

62

Dee rides her bike through the streets, weaving around cars, mule carriages, walking tours, and ruffraff. She's got a shit-eating grin and rides like Evel Kenieval.

63 **EXT. WWOZ OFFICES - FRENCH QUARTER - SOON AFTER**

63

A hand-carved sign-- "WWOZ community radio - NOLA" -- swings above the door, which is in a pedestrian mall on a busy street.

Dee runs up to the door, STUMBLING over her wildly impractical platform sandals. She opens it but a HUGE GUARD blocks it.

GREG THE GUARD

You have an appointment with O.Z.?

DEE

Yes, I'm DJ Pillar's extra-special guest today. I'm a little--

CATERPILLAR (O.S.)

She's cool, Greg.

The Guard steps aside. DJ CATERPILLAR (30s) is scrawny, wears a suede coat with tassels, a wide-brim hat, and a moustache.

DEE

(placating)

Pillar, how are ya, ya look great, so sorry, things were crazy--

CATERPILLAR

I got a Fess live jam on with 3 minutes left, so I'll make this brief. I offered you a live performance with interview on my show today and you no-call/no-show'd me. You always talk about being ready for the big time but yer just another New Orleans lifer.

DEE

But I AM ready--

CATERPILLAR

You embarrassed me-- and yourself--
in front of the whole city.

DEE

But it's not too late--

CATERPILLAR

Just gimme a couple of yer CDs.
I'll put em in the station library.

DEE

(fumbling in purse)

OK this is the latest, and this is
my best-seller, and this is your
favorite, remember? And here's--

Caterpillar grabs two without looking.

CATERPILLAR

It's really too bad this is how you
let it go down.

He closes the door on her. She's devastated.

She pulls the remaining CDs from her purse and SMASHES THEM
on the sidewalk. The Guard looks on, stone-faced.

*
*

Dee realizes she's being watched. Pulls herself together.
Gives the Guard her most defiant look. He slowly raises his
hand... and sticks a FINGER UP HIS NOSE.

*

She stomps off in a huff.

64

EXT. FRENCH MARKET - SOON AFTER

64

The French Market is across the street from WWOZ.

Dee-- phone jammed on her neck-- fumbles with her bike lock.

DEE

Bart, pick up, dang it. Caterpillar
totally screwed me over! Like he's
doing me such a huge favor. I've
paid my dues! I did 3 years at
Czeck's and 4 at the Barrel and I
TOTALLY outgrew that pig-sty and
Offbeat said I'm AWESOME and HIS
SHOW SUCKS!

*

*
*
*
*

(deep breaths, teary)

I got 5 albums, I'm on the wrong
side of 40, got no manager, I'm
OVERDUE, dammit.

*
*

[more]

DEE (cont'd)
 This town craps on songwriters.
 Fact. Only gig I been offered this
 week is at Czeck's covering for
 Duane. Screw that. I have dignity.
 (deep breath)
I quit.

*
 *

Hangs up. She throws it in her basket. The phone BZZZs: "NEW VOICEMAIL" but she doesn't see, as she's wiping tears away with a trembling hand.

Deep breath. Pulls it together. Hops on the bike.

65

EXT. NEW ORLEANS STREETS - DAY

65

Dee rides shakily past/between cars, mule carriages, pedicabs, and pedestrians with the tunnel vision of a local.

*

DEE (V.O.)
 (pre-recorded)
 Hey baby, you've reached Dee Lishiz
 and the Whole Glories, check out my
 website!

--BEEEEEEEEEP--

BART (V.O.)
 (filtered a la voicemail)
 Hey. So... Put up your flyers and
 ran into Neville Marsalis, Jr,
 outside Port in a Storm. He knows
 Jimbo Walsh and says his sound
 mixer is in town tonight and
 looking for a good show away from
 the hoopla.

Dee wipes her tears away. Pulls herself together.

*

BART (V.O.)
 Told him to come by tonight. Gonna
 be dead, could use more business.
 Yer on the Czeck's schedule with a
 question mark by your name.
 (to someone else, fading)
 HEY FUCKO... NO FERRETS!--
 (cuts off)

She stands on the pedals and rides away.

*

66

INT. SKIRO'S - SOON AFTER

66

Skiro's is a bar/cafe/laundromat/liquor store/convenience store. And an Indian restaurant. Decor: idiosyncratic.

At the check-out counter, Dee hands the CLERK (30s, bored) her ELECTRIC BILL (from Entergy).

*

DEE

Uh, just \$25 towards the balance.

Clerk rolls her eyes, processes it. Dee is ashamed.

TEXAN DANCER (O.S.)

Ohhhhmigod! Are you... Are you...
Dee from the Whole Glories?!

Dee turns. A pie-eyed tourist-- one of the dancers from the opening scene-- stares at her with effusive delight.

DEE

(stunned)

Y-Yes! That's me!

TEXAN DANCER

The hubby and I saw yous at that festival last weekend n' we thought y'all were just delightful! Oh, DEE-lightful, haha!

DEE

(eating it up)

We had a blast! Love the riverwalk.

TEXAN DANCER

You... are... SO! Talented! My stars, I think I bought both your CDs. My husband was fit to be tied but you know who wears the pants.

She winks horribly. Dee is like a girl on Christmas morning.

DEE

That's SO sweet of you! I have 5 CDs, actually, so... Oh.

She pulls a shattered corner of a jewel case from her purse.

TEXAN DANCER

Oh, it's okay, dear.

(looks around)

Say dear, want a toot?

She waggles a small vial of white powder. Dee squints. What?!

67 **INT. SKIRO'S BATHROOM**

67

Dee does a bump from the tourist's vial.

DEE

I totally shouldn't be doing this.

TEXAN DANCER

Rock and roll! I saw Phish at Jazz Fest! You're the best! My friends will be so jealous that I partied with a rock star!

DEE

Tell them about my website!

As the Dancer does a bump, Dee slips out, literally high from the encounter.

68 **EXT. SKIRO'S - SOON AFTER**

68

Dee is at a table on the sidewalk. Across from her is Stovey. He regards her warily as she concludes a speech.

DEE

...So you see, I don't need radio airplay, I've got "word of mouth" and "grassroots support," which the internet says is music's future!

STOVEY

One tourist, Dee.

DEE

Give the people what they want-- and they want me! So I'm taking Duane's gig at Czeck's tonight.

STOVEY

I quit.

DEE

You can't quit, the band's about to take off. Don't throw away years of work.

STOVEY

Why should I work for tips when all my other gigs are AT Tip's?

DEE

(trump card)

I'm going to be a mother! You don't quit on a mother!

STOVEY

I got my own family, good luck with yours.

DEE

Stovey! Quitting's for quitters! What about the BAND?!

STOVEY

The "band" is just you and whoever you got sitting in. And Czeck's? I'm out. I've hung my shoes.

Stovey holds up his hands and leaves.

DEE

STOVEY! ...Poop.

She stands up. SLAPS her iced coffee off the table into the street. Folks at other tables stare.

DEE (cont'd)

This coffee is crap. I'm going gluten-free! Yoga! Pilates!

She raises a fist and marches off. Confused CLAPPING from the patrons.

69 **EXT. WASHINGTON SQUARE PARK - TRAVELING - SOON AFTER** 69 *

Dee takes the turn onto Frenchmen Street like a kamikaze pilot. Passes Natalee without seeing.

70 **EXT. FRENCHMEN STREET** 70 *

Dee locks her bike and takes in the 9 bars/clubs on the street. Fixes her hair. Boosts her boobs. Big smile.

71 **INT. BARREL BOTTOM** 71

BEATRIX

Sorry, hon, it's not you. It's your music. Come back when you draw.

72 **INT. D.O.A.** 72

DOA MANAGER
After the last time we gave you a
shot? You got a nerve.

73 **INT. CAFE NEGRECT** 73

WILLOW
Look, I got no time to deal with
this, our barback no-showed. Plus
ain't got no room in the schedule.
Try the Barrel Bottom.

74 **EXT. FRENCHMEN STREET** 74

Dee exits Cafe Negrect. Two Quarters George walks by.

TWO QUARTERS GEORGE
Excuse me, ma'am, by any chance
would you have two quarters to
spare?

DEE
Hi, George. Sorry. *
 (idea!) *
Hold on, I got something better. *
 (opens up necklace)
Bump? *

George recoils.

TWO QUARTERS GEORGE
No, ma'am. Have a lovely day.

He hurries on, disgusted. Dee shrugs. *

A74 **EXT. THE DAUPHINE WOMENS CLINIC** A74 *

Dee hurrys towards it when she sees Nat heading her way. *Nat*
looks like a junkie who's been living in the street. *

DEE *
Crapola. *

Nowhere to turn or hide. Damn. They cross paths in front of *
the clinic and do an awkward half-stop, half-turn. *

NATALEE *
 (smacking gum) *
Hey Dee, can I borrow some money? *

DEE *
Very funny. *

NATALEE *
Men suck ass, ya know? *

DEE *
Sure, sometimes, but the world must *
be peopled. *

NATALEE *
Ugh don't remind me. *
(smirking) *
Not going in? *

DEE *
Uh, nah, going to work. *

NATALEE *
Still playing shitholes? *

DEE *
Yup. Same shithole as Bart, *
tonight. *

NATALEE *
That's right! *

She runs off. Dee glances in but moves past the clinic. *

Hears something behind her. She looks back-- Nat has reversed *
and is coming her way. Dee sighs and TURNS BACK. *

As they pass again: *

DEE NATALEE
Need to eat. Got a thing.

As Dee passes the Clinic, she grabs a brochure from the *
basket, flips through it, stops on a page. *

CLOSE: A "Services" price list. "Pregnancy Termination: \$200" *

B74 **EXT. FRENCHMEN STREET - SOON AFTER** B74 *

She walks. A flyer is shoved in her face. *

MATT (O.S.)
Ma'am, America's X-Talent is
coming! Sign up now!

DEE

Why's everyone calling me "Ma'am"?!
I'm only-- Matt?!

Incongruously, a "wigger" kid, MATT-- 20s, tracksuit, do-rag,
bling-- hands out flyers in an American's X-Talent t-shirt.

MATT

Oh shit. Sup, sis.

DEE

Matt, what are you doing?

MATT

Step off, yo!

DEE

Little brother, don't make me slap
the white off your face!

MATT

I'm sorry, I'm working!

DEE

(sniffs)
You smoking weed--?

MATT

No!

DEE

--cuz we had a deal!

MATT

I know, sis! Only just sold a
little.

DEE

(throws up her hands)
What did we discuss?

MATT

I know, I know, I'm sorry. I just
needed some extra scratch.

DEE

You have three priors. And selling
drugs is wrong.

MATT

Your boyfriend is a dealer!

DEE

Oh. That's different. Doesn't mean it's okay.

MATT

Fine. Anyway, listen. My girl's pregnant.

DEE

(forced smile)

That's... just wonderful.

MATT

No, it isn't. She's Catholic, she's gonna keep it, I got eight shifts a week at the ferry dock, handing out flyers in the sun for \$50, peddling that stupid cab, no plan, no prospects.

DEE

At least you have each other.

This comment resonates. She swallows. He misses it.

MATT

Yeah, she's my only ho. But we've only been back together a couple months. Last time she cheated on me.

DEE

As revenge for you cheating on her.

MATT

I know. I'm a piece of shit. Dee, you're the only one of us who got out. Who has a shot at being something.

DEE

Come--

MATT

No, I'm serious. Dad's gonna disown me when he hears I'm a baby daddy. Been looking for a reason. Don't tell him you saw me, okay? Just make us proud.

He hugs her. She's stunned.

MATT (cont'd)

Back to work. Love you.

DEE

Love you too. I'll make you proud.

She walks off. Matt goes back to peddling.

AROUND THE CORNER

As soon as he's out of sight, she BURSTS INTO TEARS.

Fumbles for her phone, hits AUTODIAL.

DEE (cont'd)

(sniffling)

Hey Ethan, I might be pregnant. And I don't know who the father is because I've been two-timing you with Bart. I'm a terrible person. I don't deserve you. I'll break it off with him, let's start a family. We'll raise it together and..

(frowns)

Wait a dang minute.

She looks at the phone. DEAD BATTERY.

DEE (cont'd)

CRAAAAAAAP!

75 [omitted]

75 *

76 **INT. BAR NEXT DOOR**

76 *

Dee walks in. Looks around the familiar place. Ugh. Daydrinkers ignore her.

She sees Lazy Bartender has his phone plugged in.

*

DEE

Can I charge my phone for a minute?
Just checking messages.

She gets a nod, so plugs in. Listens. Her faces changes. Angst gives way to elation. [It's Bart's voicemail]

*

DEE (cont'd)

I'm going to be famous. I knew this was going to work out! And this solves my other problem-- rock stars don't have kids!

She strikes a rock star pose. Yeah!

SMITTY, 50s, walks in carrying an instrument case and cables. Salt-and-pepper hair tied back in a rat tail. Genial face.

SMITTY

Dee, how are you? You look happy!

They hug. Dee talks a mile a minute.

DEE

I'm doing fucking wonderful. When you're done here, want to go down the street for my gig at Czeck's?

SMITTY

Er, what happened to Stovey?

DEE

He's too good for Czeck's.

SMITTY

Standard pay?

DEE

Someone from the Squirrel Nut Zippers will be there.

SMITTY

(at attention)

Oh? Scouting?

DEE

Yes. And I want my "A" band.

Dee gives her biggest smile. Smitty smiles back.

77

EXT. FRENCHMEN STREET

77

*

Dee unlocks her bike, phone tucked by her ear.

DEE

Bart, listen, when you get this, call whoever and tell him to tell the Zippers guy to send him to Czeck's tonight. I'm doing Duane's slot!

*

She hangs up. Flurry of typing. Hits SEND. Shuts it with a SNAP. She hops on her bike.

*

78

EXT. A&Z CONVENIENCE STORE - FRENCH QUARTER

78

Dee rides. Spots Ethan exiting A&Z with a Hubig's pie. *Ethan is more child-like usual.* He gives Two Quarters George a dollar but George drops it with a huff and leaves. *

DEE

Ethan, I've been looking all over for you!

She stops. Kisses him on the cheek. Ethan MUMBLES incoherently, mouth full of pie. *

DEE (cont'd)

EE-NUN-SEE-ATE, dear. You sound like a gutterpunk. Did you get my texts? *

He nods. *

DEE (cont'd) *

And...?! *

He shakes his head. *

DEE (cont'd)

For Pete's sake! Do you have my fascinator hat for tonight's show? The producer from the Squirrel Nut Zippers is coming to my gig to scout me for their next album. How did you not get that from my messages? *

ETHAN *

I dunno. *

DEE *

So? *

ETHAN *

So what? *

DEE *

Have you seen my hat?! Holy cow! *

ETHAN *

No, sorry. Haven't seen it. Guess what? I got that meeting with Paley. *

DEE

Oh baby, I know you'll do great.
Everybody likes you. Just don't go
high.

ETHAN

I've only had a handful of
bonghits.

DEE

If he asks if you use the stuff,
tell him you feel it's important
for a salesman to appreciate the
product as a customer too. That's
what I told Walgreens when they
hired me.

ETHAN

Brilliant.

She gets on her bike.

*

DEE

Come by Czeck's, I could use the
support.

ETHAN

That's where I'm meeting him.

She rides off.

DEE

(to herself)

You're a rock star. You're a rock
star. You're a rock star.

ROUSING MUSIC BEGINS...

79

EXT. FRENCH QUARTER

79

Dee rides through the street, determined.

*

80

INT. DEE'S APARTMENT - KITCHEN

80

She pours two fingers of Jameson in a coffee mug and SHOTS
IT BACK. Booyah. Rock star time.

BEDROOM

Dee throws HATS on the bed. She squints at them. Frowns.
Looks around. Grabs her phone and texts.

Starts on the shoes.

LIVING ROOM

As Dee tunes her guitar, she sings a country song absently.

She packs her guitar into a gig bag. Pulls LYRIC SHEETS from the bag's pockets. Satisfied, puts them back.

Capo. Cables. Tuner pedal. Speed winder. Extra strings.

Counts out guitar picks. Puts 1 in each pants pocket.

BEDROOM

Changes blouse. Changes boots. Changes earrings.

Applies mascara. Applies lipstick. Applies eyeliner.

Brushes hair. Pins hair. Sprays hair. Fusses with hair.

LIVING ROOM

She strides through, grabbing her guitar. Looks like a million, well, a thousand bucks. ROCK STAR confidence.

Her amp waits by the door. MUSIC CRESCENDOS...

81 **EXT. DEE'S APARTMENT** 81

Dee puts her guitar and amp into a Subaru Outback with Texas plates. She fires off a quick text.

82 **EXT. CZECK'S - LATE AFTERNOON** 82 *

Dee pulls up and slows down, looking around for parking. The car behind her HONKS.

DEE
Gimme a fucking break!

She applies the gas. THE MUSIC WEAKENS...

TWO MINUTES LATER

Dee pulls up again, slows down. No parking spots. HONKS.

DEE (cont'd)
I'm parking here! Fuck!

THE MUSIC WEAKENS MORE... Getting really half-assed...

TWO MINUTES LATER

Dee pulls up again. Her hair has come undone. She pulls into the NO PARKING place on the corner by Czeck's entrance.

In her high-heeled boots, she speed-hobbles to the trunk, HOISTS out her amp, starts to SHLEP IT INSIDE.

GUTTERFEMME (O.S.)

Hey lady!

Dee turns. Gutterfemme is leaning against the building.

GUTTERFEMME (cont'd)

I'll help you with your stuff if you buy me a beer.

DEE

Ugh. No.

She drags the amp inside with both arms.

THE MUSIC PATHETICALLY STAMMERS TO A STOP. Mood: broken.

A MINUTE LATER

Dee exits to find Officer Douvert WRITING HER A TICKET.

DEE (cont'd)

Come on! I'm loading in! I'm the goddamn band here!

OFFICER DOUVERT

Quotas, honey. Bayou Festival week.

DEE

That was last week.

OFFICER DOUVERT

No, that was Festival of the Bayou.

GUTTERFEMME

Hey lady, can I have a dollar for a beer?

Dee points at her and glares at the Cop.

OFFICER DOUVERT

What? She ain't parked bad.

She slaps a ticket on her car. Radio crackles to life:

POLICE RADIO

Unit six-one. Altercation at Barracks and Royal with mule, biker, pedicab.

(she shrugs)

Also, brass band seen setting up on corner of Frenchmen and Chartres.

Her eyes go wide and she hauls ass down the block.

A BAND OF MUSICIANS exits Czeck's, bickering.

BASSIST

I made him ring the Z twice.

GUITARIST

Four dollars for three hours of playing. Each!

BASSIST

Hey, it's more than last time.

Dee looks like she might hang herself. Matt passes.

DEE

Hey! Gimme one.

MATT

It's \$50 to sign up.

DEE

Great I can't even afford to be exploited.

Dee sighs and gets in her car.

A LITTLE LATER

Dee runs down the street as fast as her boot-heels will let her. Passes Aura, waiting outside with a tight look on her face, and turns into the bar.

83 **INT. CZECK'S STAGE**

83

Her band has beaten her to the stage. They're set up and ready, and she's a sweaty mess. Just great.

84 **INT. CZECK'S BAR - CONTINUOUS**

84

She catches Bart as he comes out of the back office.

DEE

Bart, why the hell aren't you answering the phone?

BART

You too? Everybody's busting my balls today.

DEE

Where were you this morning?

BART

Really? I'm working! Holy shit, Dee. I hadn't come home yet, okay? I passed out at Barrel Bottom.

DEE

You should've called.

Bart rolls his eyes and goes behind the bar.

85

INT. CZECK'S STAGE - CONTINUOUS

85

She strides over to the band, shifting into boss mode.

SMITTY

(smiling)

Nice of you to join us.

Guitarist ROBBIE, 30s, is skinny and Italian. Her drummer, ANKLES, 20s, is hipsterish and cynical.

ANKLES

Smitty says a producer is coming. Who are the Zipping Squirrel Nuts?

DEE

(fast, breathless)

He is and they're great and we are going to be AMAZING goddammit so I want EVERYBODY'S A-game. None of that chitlin shit. We could make HISTORY tonight.

WIDE: The band members look around the mostly-empty dive bar with professional skepticism.

Smitty leans his bass on his amp and pulls out a glass bowl.

SMITTY

Let's get professional.

ANKLES

Is that the purple stuff from last time?

SMITTY

Nah just some brickweed I got from Kylie.

Dee's been setting up her gear. She turns around.

DEE

You got it from one of Ethan's customers instead of him?

SMITTY

Kylie got it from Ethan? Shit. That's fucked up.

He lights up. Dee casually gets close to Ankles.

DEE

(sotto voce)
Ankles, you gotta bump?

ANKLES

Nah, I got out of the distribution business. Ware said there's too much competition, shit was cheaper than chalk.

DEE

No, I'm offering. Who's Ware?

ANKLES

The WereWalrus.

DEE

And I thought "Ankles" was ridiculous.

Suddenly-- A COMMOTION at the bar-- They look to see:

POV OF BAR: Freddy is attempting to CLIMB ONTO THE BAR as Bart and several patrons pull him down.

FREDDY

I'M FREE! I'M FREE!

BACK AT STAGE:

SMITTY

Ankles is out of the biz, but I got some pills from the bartender at Barrel Bottom if you want them.

DEE
 (offended)
 Ugh, no thanks. Gonna go freshen up
 for the producer.

The guys exchange knowing glances. Dee crosses the room. Taps *
 Ethan, he gets up and follows her.

In passing, she spots the Gutterfemme at the ATM machine. *
Dee POV: she's frantic, checking and re-checking her pockets.

86 [omitted] 86

87 [omitted] 87

88 **INT. CZECK'S STAGE - A LITTLE LATER** 88

On stage, the band is ready. Dee consults a binder.

ANKLES
 So where's this guy?

DEE
 He'll be here. Let's get warmed up.
 I always mess up the second line to
 "Down So Long," let's do it first.

She's the boss. They start playing. The dancers stand up and
 start swaying.

Dee sings. She's earnest but not great. The years have left
 her voice pretty ragged.

DEE (cont'd)
I been down so long..

Dee POV: CRASH. Ethan is tackled. Dee borks the next line.

FREEZE FRAME: Dee's shocked face. Behind her, Ethan and Old
 Man Dillard are being plowed to the floor.

SNAP INTO MOTION:

They hit the floor. CRACK-- The Kid's beer stein shatters.

Dee looks at the band, but they haven't missed a beat.

DEE (cont'd)
Ain't heard no voice since Sunday..

She sees Natalee fall onto Ethan.

DEE (cont'd)
 (frowning)
 Uh, Bart...?

The two Dancers go to watch the fight, DELIGHTED. The Kid just gapes from his stool.

TEXAN DANCER
 Don't worry, kid, this happens all the time.
 (gestures)
 As long as Bart the Sheriff is here, you're safe.

She sees Gutterfemme on top of the pile, swinging.

DEE
 Godammit.

89 **INT. CZECK'S BAR - CONTINUOUS**

89

Pissed, she jumps off the stage and grabs a stool. It's heavy enough she has to twist her whole body to SWING IT, meaning she doesn't see Bart come out from behind the bar.

She KOs Bart. He drops hard.

FISTFULS OF CASH EXPLODE FROM HIS POCKETS like a cash cannon. Dollars in all denominations fly into the air.

DEE
 Oh gosh!

Dee is tackled from behind by one of the dancers. They land hard on the thrashing pile.

DEE (cont'd)
OOF.

The impact knocks Bart off the pile and onto the floor. He lands in a puddle of spilled beer.

Under Dee, the Gutterfemme grabs at the cash. The dancer does too. Ethan and Natalee see and start reaching. Old Man Dillard gets serious air as he jumps for the fluttering bills.

B89 **INT. CZECK'S DOORWAY**

B89

A SPECTACLED MAN (age: ?!) enters unseen. Spectacles wears a long coat and tightly holds a BRIEFCASE.

He stares at the pandemonium. Impossible to tell if he is a gangster, a local drunk, a lost tourist, or what.

Spectacles pulls out a phone. Calmly DIALS.

B89 **INT. CZECK'S BAR - CONTINUOUS**

B89

On the floor, Bart SPUTTERS, chokes.

HE COMES TO. His eyes open and focus. CLOSE ON: His wet, bruised, dirty, confused face. A \$10 bill lands on it.

MATCH DISSOLVE:

90 **INT. BAR NEXT DOOR - DAWN**

90 *

Bart's sleeping face. Clean, peaceful. The first and last time we'll see him in anything like a state of grace. The \$10 bill is now a \$5. WIDE TO REVEAL--

Bart is passed out on the bar. The end of a long night in this 24-hour dive. Only 2 other customers, and a veteran, seen-it-all BARTENDER, who puts a shot down next to Bart's head with a BANG. Bart jerks awake. *

VETERAN BARTENDER

Your change, Bart.

BART

--I'm awake!

He sits up, looks around. Shakes his head.

BART (cont'd)

Fuuuuuck.

VETERAN BARTENDER

A shot for the road. Kalhua and Fireball.

Bart shoots it, grimaces.

BART

Uh, owe you anything?

VETERAN BARTENDER

Nah. You didn't puke this time. *

BART

Thanks, mate.

He bangs the shot glass twice on the bar.

91 **EXT. SLAVE QUARTERS - BALCONY - DAWN** 91

This is a small 2-story building behind a Creole cottage. On the 2nd level, Bart drunkenly unlocks a door and stumbles in.

92 **INT. BART'S APARTMENT - CONTINUOUS** 92

He flips on the light-- he's in the kitchen. We recognize that this is the apartment Natalee woke up in.

He belches, stumbles past the table and into the

LIVING ROOM

The hide-a-bed couch is folded up. He pulls an old pack of cigarettes out from between the cushions and pulls one out. It's broken, half dangling. He shrugs and starts to light it.

BAM-- a CRASH from the other room as NATALEE COMES CRASHING IN

NATALEE
(drunk, hyper)
Bart you asshole where are you!

BART
The hell?

He turns to the noise and she POUNCES him-- knocks him over the couch's armrest, her legs wrapped around his back, sending his cigarette and lighter flying across the room. They hit the wall with a CLATTER.

They're all over each other-- kissing, biting, growling, licking, rolling off the couch onto the floor-- BAM-- into the coffee table-- CRASH-- across the rug until they hit a dead ficus.

NATALEE
(panting)
You asshole. You cheat.

BART
Fuck you. Let's open this thing.

They scramble for the couch, throw the cushions everywhere. YANK the fold-out bed out. The frame hits Bart in the head.

He falls over, moaning.

NATALEE
The girls at the bar got me RILED!
Woo!

She throws up into the ficus.

BART

Get up there and have a mint. I can
smell the Jager.

She crawls onto the bed. Shakes her head woozily.

Bart crawls up, rolls her over, straddles her. She pulls her
shirt off.

They go at each other's pants. After some fumbling they
realize the futility and switch to their own pants.

Bart pulls his pants down, then has to put one leg on the
floor to get that pant leg off, then has to switch legs to
get the other off. He finally throws them across the room.

NATALEE

Wrap that shit!

She throws a condom at him. He rips it with his teeth, spits
out the wrapper, flips it over a couple times, puts it on.

Gets between Nat's legs, grabs her by the hips, moves her
over, pulls her panties off, lies on her, starts humping.

BART

Ugh-- fuck-- jesus my foot-- move
this way-- better-- shit-- yes--

He abruptly STOPS. Looks down-- her head is over the side of
the bed.

BART (cont'd)

Nat?

He lifts her head-- she's out cold. He freezes. Looks around.
Lifts one arm; it falls limp. He pulls her glove off it.

BART (cont'd)

(slurring)

Blah. Fucking leather.

He reaches down and PULLS OFF THE CONDOM. Throws it onto the
ficus. Reinserts himself. Starts humping away again.

He lifts one of her legs into the air by his head. He is
surprised and disgusted as her boot rubs against his face.

BART (cont'd)

Precious shit-kickers.

Still humping, he unzips the boot, then unlaces it. Pulls. It doesn't budge. Finds another zipper, pulls on it. Boot comes loose. He starts to fling it, then places it on the floor.

BART (cont'd)

UHHHH.

Bart comes.

BART (cont'd)

Fuck.

He lowers the leg. Looks down.

BART (cont'd)

Nat? Natalee. Nat. Get up.

He gets off her. Sees one boot is still on. Pauses. Starts unlacing it.

BART (cont'd)

I'm too fucking nice.

His phone's ALARM goes off.

BART (cont'd)

Fucking day.

93 **INT. BART'S BATHROOM** 93

He turns on the shower. Nothing. Bangs the pipe. Nothing.

BART

Really?

94 **EXT. BART'S APARTMENT - DAWN** 94

Bart closes his door, checks that it's locked, leaves.

95 **INT. DEE'S BEDROOM - MORNING** 95

Bart tip-toes in, pocketing his key. Dee sleeps.

He adjusts his crotch as he looks down at her, considering. Wipes his nose-- double-takes at the smell of his fingers.

96 **INT. DEE'S BATHROOM** 96

Bart showers.

97

INT. BEDROOM

97

Bart crawls into bed with Dee. Passes out.

LATER - AFTERNOON LIGHT

Bart wakes up. Looks at his phone on the bedside table.

5 MISSED CALLS. What the hell.

Carefully-- so as not to wake Dee snoring next to him-- he slides out of bed and tip-toes into the living room. Phone:

BART

Freddy, what the hell's going on?
 ...I can't read your texts, I can
 send them but I ain't paying extra
 to read them. Get to the point--
Fuck. OK. Be there in ten.

Pockets phone. Yawns. Sighs. Tries to find his game face.

98

EXT. DEE'S APARTMENT - FRENCH QUARTER - AFTERNOON

98

Bart closes the gate behind him. Walks to a carriage hitch. There is a BIKE chained to it, along with the remains of old thefts: a bike frame and a loose wheel, both still locked up.

Bart lifts the padlock and gets his keys out, but-- A CAR SUDDENLY REVERSES AND SWERVES TOWARD THE HITCH.

BART

HEY!

Car slams on the brakes. Just in time: its bumper pushes against the frame, pinning Bart's bike to the hitch.

BART (cont'd)

What the shit! Watch it, fuckos!

Car windows roll down at once, FOUR DRUNK TRANNIES lean out. They eat Tollhouse cookies, having a grand ol' time.

TIARA TRANNY

Look out, honey! Don't ride drunk!

They break up. Bart is not amused.

BART

Move the car!

The trannies stop laughing.

TIARA TRANNY

What. The. Fuck. Jenny, hold me
back, I'm going to fuck this bitch
UP!

BART

Seriously, I have to get to work!

TIARA TRANNY

I think the Mayor of Barracks
Street doesn't know who he's
messing with.

She shifts gears, and the car lurches.

BART

Jesus Christ. Thank you.

TIARA TRANNY

No hard feelings, sugar. Come here
a second, I have a question.

She leans out the window. Bart comes over.

BART

What?

TIARA TRANNY

Where can I get a hit of POWDER!!

POW! Tiara Tranny hits him in the face with a BAG OF FLOUR.
The trannies HOWL and peel out.

Bart looks like an albino mime. He blinks slowly. Flour
crumbles off him.

BART

Mother. Fucker.

He locks his bike back to the carriage hitch.

BART (cont'd)

(on phone)

Freddy, I need another fifteen.

He opens the gate, and enters.

99

INT. DEE'S BATHROOM

99

Bart enters the bathroom, calling over his shoulder.

BART

Showering!

DEE (O.S.)
Gotta go make an ass of myself on
the radio. Bye!

Door SLAMS O.S. Bart gets under the spray. Glares like a cat
in a bath. Cannot believe this shit.

100 **INT. DEE'S KITCHEN - SOON AFTER** 100

Bart's now extra-scrubbed and clean. Hair slicked back. The
shower seems to have mellowed him out, but it was hasty: he's
still got flour around his ear and in his nostrils.

He checks his phone. "3 MISSED CALLS. From: Work"

BART
Yeah yeah.

Dee has left a stack of flyers on the table with a note.

He squints at it: "HAND THESE OUT PLEASE!! :-)"

101 **EXT. DEE'S APARTMENT - FRENCH QUARTER - MINUTES LATER** 101

He exits the gate, flyers in hand. Dumps them in the trash.

Unlocks his bike, looks both ways, and rides off. Coming down
the block behind him is the pedicab with Mr Goat and Ethan.

102 **EXT. FRENCH QUARTER STREET - CONTINUOUS** 102

Bart takes the corner steeply, standing on the pedals as he
pumps.

A MULE CARRIAGE

is pulling out. It swings wide to go around a PEDICAB moving
sluggishly down the middle of the narrow street.

Bart swings wide to go around the carriage BUT-- the mule
abruptly sidesteps into his path--

CARRIAGE DRIVER
Woah!

BART
Fuck!

Bart tries to go up on the sidewalk but BALCONY POLES BLOCK
HIM so he corrects again and PLOWS INTO THE MULE-- T-boning
the beast at top velocity.

The mule BRAYS and REARS.

Bart's bike goes under the mule and skips down the street like a stone across water.

Bart tries to hang onto the mule's side but falls HARD to the pavement. Lands on his back. CRUNCH

The carriage tips up and PASSENGER1 goes head over heels off the back of it, landing luckily but stupidly on her butt.

PASSENGER2

DEBBIE!

Bart MOANS. Opens his eyes.

Bart POV: a rearing mule and its genitals.

He rolls out of the way as the Driver gets control of the animal.

SQUISH. Bart has rolled into a mule patty. EWWW

He rolls off it-- RIGHT INTO THE PATH OF A PEDICAB DRIVEN BY MATT. It runs over his leg, popping a side-wheelie.

BART

OW!

A splash of pink daiquiri lands on Bart's head with a SPLAT.

He grabs his leg, wincing. Looks, but from his low angle, he can't make out who is in the pedicab.

Hobbles to his feet, using a pole for support. Watches the pedicab avoid the remains of his bike.

BART (cont'd)

Shit. Loved that bike.

The Carriage Driver and Passengers are screaming at each other. The Woman Passenger sees him.

WOMAN PASSENGER

He's got coke in his nose!

He wipes his nose, confused. Flour on his fingers.

CARRIAGE DRIVER

I'm calling the cops!

He makes a decision: run. Limpes off at top speed.

CARRIAGE DRIVER (O.S.) (cont'd)
Hey! Asshole! Get back here! I know
what you look like!

He rounds the corner. Pulls out phone. Its glass is SMASHED,
but legible is "6 MISSED CALLS - From: WORK"

He smells himself and winces. Walks back as fast as possible
while dialing.

103

EXT. DEE'S STREET - FRENCH QUARTER

103

He turns the corner-- almost there. He can see Dee's gate.

BART
(on phone)
I'm coming, I swear, but need
another twenty. Don't fucking ask.

SQUIRREL (O.S.)
Yo, Bart!

Oh fuck. Bart hobbles double-time.

Across the street, SQUIRREL (40s), a very dodgy-looking dude
in a stained apron, smokes by the service door to a
bar/restaurant called Port in a Storm. He hollars--

SQUIRREL (cont'd)
Hey! I just served Neville Marsalis
Jr! What's that giant stain on ya?

BART
No time!

SQUIRREL
Neville's eating with Jimbo from
the Squirrel Zippers! And my name's
Squirrel! How about that!

Bart fumbles for his keys at the gate. Grits teeth.

BART
Amazing.

SQUIRREL
Hey that's where Dee lives! I told
Neville Marsalis and Jimbo to send
a scout or a producer or something
to check her out cuz she's great!

Bart drops his keys. Sweating. Panic.

SQUIRREL (cont'd)

Tell her I told them to do that,
okay? I'm looking out! Hey, you
still at Czeck's? You need any
barbacks over there?

The gate finally opens.

BART

Sorry can't hear you! Bye!

The gate SLAMS behind him.

104 **EXT. CZECK'S - LATER - AFTERNOON** 104

Bart has changed clothes, showered again. He hustles. Limp
has improved a little.

The sidewalk is totally devoid of people. Odd. He enters.

105 **INT. CZECK'S DOORWAY - CONTINUOUS** 105

Bart enters to find PANDEMONIUM.

GUTTERPUNKS are everywhere. Their dogs run loose.

A105 **INT. CZECK'S STAGE** A105

The band-- the one Dee saw exiting-- isn't playing, but
ARGUING LOUDLY WITH EACH OTHER and THROWING BEER.

106 **INT. CZECK'S BAR - SAME TIME** 106

TWO GUYS punch the ATM so hard it rocks on its foundation.

Drunks throw food... shove each other... taunt the dogs...

...while Freddy the bartender loudly acts out a story to a
DRUNK GROUP OF FRIENDS at the end of the bar.

107 **INT. CZECK'S DOORWAY** 107

Bart's face hardens.

He boot-stomps through the chaos, shoving people left and
right as he BEE-LINES to Freddy.

DRUNK (O.S.)

Hey! Asshole! Peace out, bro!

108

INT. CZECK'S BAR - CONTINUOUS

108

Bart lifts the chain and gets behind the bar.

FREDDY

(drunk, animated)

Hey pal you can't-- Oh hey it's
Bart! Just in time!

Freddy and his pals crack up.

DRUNKS

Hi Bart!

BART

Freddy WHAT THE FUCK is going on?

Freddy leans back, no problemo.

FREDDY

Well it was like this. The band
showed up fucked up from last
night, kids were horsing around,
and I was getting really uptight,
and they were getting uptight, and
I realized, woah, I was making them
uptight and they were making ME
uptight and this was a situation
where being uptight was only going
to create a lot of conflict and
conflict just hurts everybody, man,
like on the inside, ya know. Just
really bad juju, plus I wasn't
feeling the energy space. So I
called you, but it took you like 2
hours to get here, what gives?

*
*

*

Bart stares at him in slack-jawed disbelief.

FREDDY (cont'd)

Anyway, I figured maybe you could
help me with crowd control while I
serve, and we can split the tips...?

BART

The key.

He holds out his hand.

FREDDY

What?

BART

The key. Hand it over. I'm starting my shift early. You're relieved.

Several emotions wash over Freddy-- shock, embarrassment, disgust, disbelief... Then he LAUGHS.

FREDDY

Shit! Okay! I'm getting fucked up!

The drunks CHEER.

BART

Not so fast. Help me get control of this place.

QUICK CUTS-- there's a new sheriff in town--

109 **INT. CZECK'S DOORWAY** 109

-- Bart & Freddy corral the gutterpunks and dogs out. Most are "c'est la vie" but GUTTERFEMME throws him the bitchface.

110 **INT. CZECK'S STAGE** 110

-- Bart lectures the band as Freddy gets a mop from the closet. They nod sheepishly and get back to playing.

111 **INT. LAUNDROMAT - CZECK'S** 111

-- Bart walks in on a couple WINOS adding potatoes to the soup they're making in the washing machine.

112 **INT. CZECK'S MEN'S ROOM** 112

-- Men's room. Bart finishes up and FLUSHES. Toilet makes a weird sound. He lifts the back-- UGH! He drops the lid.

113 **INT. CZECK'S STAGE** 113

Bart approaches a mopping Freddy.

FREDDY

What's wrong?

BART

Someone left an upper-decker in the Men's room.

FREDDY

Again?

114 INT. CZECK'S BAR - A LITTLE LATER

114

Behind the bar, Bart and Freddy close up the register for shift change. Bart points out a pile of paper scraps.

BART

What is this, Freddy?

FREDDY

Messages for the manager.

BART

What the fuck. Dude, no wonder you're always in trouble with her.

FREDDY

Huh?

BART

Someone asks for the manager, you're the manager. You settle it yourself. If it's a complaint, nobody has to know.

FREDDY

Huh.

BART

Boss thinks I'm the perfect employee.

Freddy laughs. Bart smirks.

FREDDY

Why do you have flour in your ear?

BART

Gay mafia attack.

A COASTER FLIES BY THEM. Freddy's drunk friends are throwing things. Freddy goes over. Bart checks: is he reprimanding them? Nope, he's laughing and high-fiving. Bart watches them do a shot and rolls his eyes.

Pulls out his phone, makes a call.

BART (cont'd)

Hey Dee. I put up the flyers you gave me.

[more]

BART (cont'd)
 You know yer on the Czeck's
 schedule with a question mark by
 your name? I ran into Neville
 Marsalis, Jr at Port in a Storm.
 Says Jimbo's sound mixer is looking
 for some hoopla. Told him to come
 by tonight.
 (looking O.S.)
 HEY FUCKO... NO FERRETS!--

115 **INT. CZECK'S DOORWAY - LATER**

115

Bart changes a trash bag. Mr Goat quietly slips inside.
 Speaking in a low voice:

MR GOAT
 Might be a visitor here tonight.

BART
 Dude. You know I don't give a shit.

MR GOAT
 Don't interfere. Just let us work.

BART
 As long as you buy a drink.

Bart walks off. Mr Goat pops a candy in his mouth and exits.

116 **INT. CZECK'S BAR**

116

Order has been restored, with the sole exception of Freddy
 and his FRIEND, who are getting hammered.

Bart tends bar. With only a handful of people to bother him,
 he's finally relaxed a little.

Willow-- Ethan's boss from Cafe Negrect-- enters.

WILLOW
 Bart, you the manager?

BART
 Why yes, I'm the manager.

WILLOW
 Morgan at Kramer's asked me to tell
 other managers: Reality Bites is
 back.

BART
 Um. The movie?

WILLOW

The old cash-for-charge scam.

BART

Oh right. How's that work again?

WILLOW

They charge cash transactions to a stolen card and pocket the money.

BART

Well, I appreciate the warning. I'll keep a close eye out.

WILLOW

(flirty)

Say, what ya doing after work?

BART

Oh, I dunno. I'll find ya.

They shake. She frowns and looks at her hand.

BART (cont'd)

Don't worry. Just juice from the trash bags.

LATER

Bart hands chips to a drunk. Hears YELLING from the street.

BART (cont'd)

Hey Freddy, can you watch the bar for a minute? Gonna check that out.

Freddy is blotto. Looks up. Takes an effort to focus on Bart.

FREDDY

(slurring)

Sure thing. The back will be here when you get bar.

Bart shrugs and leaves his post.

117

EXT. CZECK'S - DUSK

117

*

Bart looks up and down the street. Nothing unusual.

Bart shrugs, wipes his hands, turns back to the bar--

His feet are knocked out from under him by a DOG. A dog from the bar earlier. He falls, landing on the leash.

Two Quarters George sees and hurries over.

TWO QUARTERS GEORGE
Are you okay?

THE HERD OF GUTTERPUNKS APPEARS around the corner. They point and run over.

BART
Get away from me, you dirtbags!

Gutterfemme hangs out a distance away. Watching. Alert.

GUTTERFEMME
Cops! Cops!

Sure enough, an NOPD car is pulling up.

Bart tries to stand but the gutterpunks grab the leash and he goes down again. They run away, knocking Two Quarters George to the ground.

TWO QUARTERS GEORGE
Oh, excuse me!

Officer Douvert TROTS UP as Bart gets to his feet.

OFFICER DOUVERT
You okay sir? Were you mugged by them?

BART
Uh, don't think so.

He looks down. His pockets spilled on the sidewalk. Besides a lighter and cigarettes, there's a BAG OF WEED and a JOINT.

He freezes, looks at the Cop, who stares back.

OFFICER DOUVERT
Well well.

BART
I'm the manager at Czeck's. I came out to see about the commotion.

OFFICER DOUVERT
It's just not your night.

The Cop pulls out her CUFFS. Bart sighs. Busted.

But she steps past him, pushes George up against the building, and CUFFS HIM.

TWO QUARTERS GEORGE
Excuse me, sir? I believe maybe--

OFFICER DOUVERT
You have the right to remain
silent..

George gives up and slumps. Not again.

The Cop's back is turned, so Bart grabs the joint and moves toward Czeck's. Something catches his eye-- a GOLD VISA CARD on the sidewalk, half hidden under a trash can. Bart hesitates, then grabs it. *

BART
Finally, something goes my way.

He goes inside, not looking back as Two Quarters George is stuffed into a police car.

118 INT. CZECK'S DOORWAY - CONTINUOUS

118

Bart enters to see Freddy CLIMBING ONTO THE BAR. People laugh, having a grand ol' time. He runs over and pulls him down.

FREDDY
I'M FREE! I'M FREE!

BART
Jesus, Freddy, can't I get a moment
of peace today?

FREDDY
That's it! It's showtime!

Everybody knows what that means-- Half yell "YES!" and half yell "NO!" as Freddy starts to TAKE OFF HIS OVERALLS.

Bart shoves Freddy towards the door.

BART
No way, Freddy! You're 86'd!

FREDDY
What! For how long?!

BART
Forever! Or your next shift! Or I
change my mind!

Bart puts him in a bearhug and drags him to the door. Ethan enters, freezes at the sight. Bart gives him a curt nod.

119 **INT. CZECK'S BAR - LATER** 119

Behind bar, Bart rings up a sale. Pauses. Slips the credit card out of his pocket. Nobody's looking, so he runs it. *

BRRRT. TRANSACTION ACCEPTED. A receipt is spit out. Bart's eyebrow twitches. He crumples up both copies. Trash. *

He folds Old Man Dillard's cash in half, puts it in his back pocket.

LATER

Ethan and Freddy work out something on a napkin.

Bart runs the card, pockets some cash. Faster now.

A119 **INT. CZECK'S DOORWAY - LATER** A119

Dee enters, sweaty and harried. Freddy leaves.

B119 **INT. CZECK'S BAR - SAME TIME** B119

Bart runs the card, takes the cash. Has the rhythm down.

LATER

The opening scene. The Kid sits down between the Gutterfemme and Ethan.

Bart runs the card like a veteran grifter. His pockets bulge with cash. The trash is filled with crumpled receipts.

Natalee enters, upset. She bee-lines to the bar. The only one who sees is Dee, singing on stage.

Natalee stops at the chain in the bar's gap. Starts to talk but her throat catches. Swallows and composes herself.

NATALEE

Ummm... Bart? Hey, Bart?

At the grill, Bart turns. Mild surprise.

BART

Oh hey. Gimme a minute.

He turns back. Natalee leans over the chain.

NATALEE

(whisper/hiss)

Bart... Bart! We gotta talk, man...!

Bart waves her off without turning around.

The Kid is unnerved by Natalee's energy. Ethan peeks over.

NATALEE (cont'd)
BART GODDAMMIT!

Bart gives her a "WTF" shrug, spatula dangling.

ETHAN
Hey Natalee... What's up?

Natalee gives him a rote peck. On stage, Dee notes them.

NATALEE
Hey Ethan. Now's a bad time.

Ethan looks from Bart to Nat and back. Hmmm. Wheels turning.

THE BEER IS KNOCKED OUT OF THE KID'S HAND BY THE GUTTERFEMME
TACKLING ETHAN--

WHAM! The tackle sends him toppling off his stool. He HITS
Old Man Dillard and they hit the floor, Gutterfemme on top,
slapping wildly.

Natalee JUMPS out of the way. The Kid's beer SMASHES.

GUTTERFEMME
You cheap fucking sonuvabitch
lowlife gypper!

Bart double-takes, stunned.

120 **INT. CZECK'S STAGE - SAME TIME** 120

Dee fumbles a line of lyric. The Dancers stop and stare. The
band keeps playing.

121 **INT. CZECK'S BAR - CONTINUOUS** 121

ETHAN
The werewalrus! Ahh! It's a set up!

Ethan tries to wrestle Gutterfemme off him but she outweighs
him and he's got no leverage.

Old Man Dillard SLAPS and HOWLS. Natalee grabs Gutterfemme.

NATALEE
Get off him you fucking thief!

She tries to pull her off and SLIPS, falling on them. The Gutterfemme PUNCHES her in the head. Natalee GRABS HER HAIR. She YELLS.

Underneath, Ethan wiggles desperately. Old Man Dillard HOWLS under him. On stage, Dee stares.

OLD MAN DILLARD

Help! Help!

The Kid stares, gape-mouthed. The two Dancers look on, DELIGHTED at the fracas.

TEXAN DANCER

Don't worry, kid, this happens all the time.

(gestures at bartender)

As long as Bart-the-sheriff's here, you're safe.

Bart SLAMS HIS TOWEL on the bar.

BART

DAMMIT! NOT ON MY WATCH PEOPLE!

He PULLS OUT A BASEBALL BAT and unhooks the chain. Beat. He puts the bat away and steps forward.

BART (cont'd) (CONT'D)

LAST CHANCE. I DON'T GET PAID ENOUGH TO WIPE YOUR DUMB ASSES.

He leans down and grabs the Gutterfemme's jacket with both hands. But he pauses-- face to face with Ethan.

BART (cont'd) (CONT'D)

(low, snarling)

Don't think I'm going to help your skinny ass, punk.

Ethan is stunned.

122

INT. CZECK'S STAGE - SAME TIME

122

Dee can't just watch.

DEE

Godammit.

123 **INT. CZECK'S BAR - CONTINUOUS**

123

Dee jumps off the stage and grabs a bar stool. SWINGS IT with her whole body.

WHACK! Bart is clocked upside the cranium. He drops hard.

CASH EXPLODES FROM HIS POCKETS. Dollars in all denominations fly into the air.

She drops the stool in shock. CRASH. She covers her mouth.

DEE

Oh gosh!

Dancer2, running at the money, shoves Dee from behind.

DEE (cont'd)

OOF.

Old Man Dillard squirts out from under the pile as Dee and the Dancer land on it.

Bart lies on the floor in a puddle of spilled beer. The credit card hangs halfway out of his back pocket.

Under Dee, the Gutterfemme reaches up to grab at the cash. Ethan and Natalee see and start grabbing. Old Man Dillard gets serious air as he jumps for the fluttering bills.

124 **INT. CZECK'S DOORWAY - SAME TIME**

124

Unseen, in the entrance, stands the Spectacled Man. He takes the scene in, and calmly pulls out a phone. DIALS.

125 **INT. CZECK'S BAR - CONTINUOUS**

125

On the floor, Bart COMES TO. Money floats down around him.

BART

Oh shit...

Bart scrambles to his feet and SLIPS ON NATALEE'S SOAP. He hits the ground and the rest of his cash falls out and lands in front of Ethan in a wad. Ethan grabs it all and stuffs it in his pants.

NATALEE

AURA! Where the fuck are you?!

126 **EXT. CZECK'S - SAME TIME** 126

Aura has wandered away and is talking to a WOMAN IN BODY PAINT selling tamales on a bicycle cart. Aura spins the brass knuckles on her finger as she flirts and laughs.

127 **INT. CZECK'S DOORWAY - CONTINUOUS** 127

The Spectacled Man watches the melee from the doorway, phone to his ear.

HIS POV-- cash flutters as Old Man Dillard, the Dancers, and everyone on the floor jump and grab for it.

128 **INT. CZECK'S BAR - CONTINUOUS** 128

The Kid tries to pull Ethan up. From the floor Gutterfemme punches him in the back.

Natalee lunges at Bart, swinging a fist, and falls on the pile. He doesn't even notice.

Dee gets to her feet, dazed. The band hasn't stopped playing. Dee sees the Spectacled Man-- OH SHIT! IT'S HIM!

She speed-hobbles over on a broken heel.

129 **INT. CZECK'S DOORWAY - CONTINUOUS** 129

Dee hastily fixes her hair.

DEE

(forcing a smile)

Oh my goodness! Hello! Welcome to the show! Thanks for coming! We're just getting the kinks out! Ha ha!

He stares at her, phone by ear.

DEE (cont'd)

I dunno who yer calling but hang out, have a beer, ya know? Catch the rest of the set before calling anyone with hasty judgments. We're just getting warmed up!

She gives him a huge fake smile. He slowly lowers the phone.

130 **INT. CZECK'S DOORWAY - SAME TIME**

130

Across the room, Ethan sees Spectacles and freezes.
Gutterfemme uses the moment to get in a kidney punch.

Ethan GRUNTS and rushes over, passing Natalee, who picks her soap up and tries to wipe it with a napkin.

BART

Everybody who has grabbed money,
that's MINE and give it back now!

Nobody pays attention to him, except Natalee, who stares with growing decisiveness.

131 **INT. CZECK'S DOORWAY - CONTINUOUS**

131

ETHAN

Are you, I mean, uh, Werewalrus?

Ethan pulls out a King of Hearts. Bart looks over and shouts. *

BART

Who said "Werewalrus"?!

They ignore him.

DEE

Ethan, this is the guy who knows
the guy from the Squirrel Nut
Zippers--

ETHAN

I'm ready to do business, sir.

SPECTACLES

I'm not ready to make a deal.

ETHAN

What do you mean?

DEE

What do you mean?

Spectacles pulls out a copy of OFF-BEAT magazine.

SPECTACLES (cont'd)

I just paid \$2 for this from a guy
on the corner. Turns out it's free
in every bar. I just wanna know
where the Spotted Cat is.

*

Devastated, Ethan and Dee point the same direction.
Spectacles nods and leaves.

DEE
 (shouts after him)
 At least take some CDs!

She hits Ethan in the shoulder. He recoils.

ETHAN
 Wait, what if that was him and he
 changed his mind?

DEE
 Exactly! Go after him and get him
 back!

ETHAN
 Wait what?

BART
 You idiots just trashed my bar!

They turn to face a steaming Bart.

ETHAN
 I was attacked!

DEE
 I tried to break it up.

BART
 You fucking cold-cocked me to save
 this scrawny dickweed.

132 **INT. CZECK'S BAR - SAME TIME**

132

Unseen by anyone, ONE OF THE DRUNKS at the bar slowly picks up his briefcase, crosses to the exit, and leaves it by the trash as he leaves. Tucked in the handle is a King of Hearts.

133 **INT. CZECK'S DOORWAY - CONTINUOUS**

133

NATALEE
 (exploding from nowhere)
 Don't talk about him like that, you
 pig!

They turn to her, startled.

DEE
 What--

NATALEE

(to Bart)

You're a fucking LIAR and a RAPIST,
Bart, and I'm going to tell the
world unless you admit it!

BART

What?! You're fucking psycho!

DEE

You can't talk to my boyfriend like
that!

ETHAN

I'm your boyfriend!

NATALEE

He raped me after I passed out.

Ethan's got whiplash. Dee pauses, wide-eyed. Bart snaps--

BART

The fuck you talking about, you
homeless bitch! I let you crash on
my couch for free and this is how
you repay me!

NATALEE

Just cuz I need a place at the
moment doesn't mean I'm just shit!

ETHAN

Y-Y-You're... homeless?

Dee nods quietly to Ethan as Bart goes off--

BART

You got NO grounds for accusing
anybody, NO business being in here,
NO job, NO life, and NO proof!

NATALEE

(quiet, strong)

You never listen. You never
should've have taken my boots off.

Ethan takes an involuntary step back in shock.

ETHAN

Oh shit. Dude. You're fucked.

BART
(turning on him)
And how do you know what that means, you little fuck?

ETHAN
Everybody--

DEE
But you were fucking him, right?

NATALEE
Why the fuck does that matter?

BART
EVERYBODY OUT OF MY BAR! Starting with you and your boyfriend!
(to Gutterfemme)
And you too. Gimme my money, before I call the fucking cops.

Gutterfemme peels a DISGUSTING BILL off the floor. She holds it up and beer and slime drip off of it.

OFFICER DOUVERT (O.S.)
No need to call the "fucking cops."

Everyone spins toward the door. She strides in.

BART
Finally! A cop when I need one.

OFFICER DOUVERT
Found this driver's license outside. Anybody here a "Missy Goldenberg"?

She holds up the license-- it has GUTTERFEMME'S PHOTO.

GUTTERFEMME
That's mine! It was stolen along with my credit cards and iPhone.

NATALEE
Of course she has an iPhone.

OFFICER DOUVERT
Hey, anybody forget their briefcase?

She holds it up. Confused beat as everyone stares.

ETHAN
Oh that's mine. Thank you, officer.

He takes it from her. Hugs it to his chest with both arms as if this is the normal way to carry it, tries to look casual.

Natalee sees the gold card sticking out of Bart's back pocket. SHE GRABS IT. He spins around--

BART
What the fuck!

NATALEE
Ha! "Missy Goldenberg"!

GUTTERFEMME
What the fuck?!

BART
Arrest her! And her!

NATALEE
Where'd all that cash come from,
Bart? Huh? Tell the officer!

Bart LUNGES AT HER but she throws the card to Gutterfemme.

GUTTERFEMME
I want this guy arrested!

OFFICER DOUVERT
Do you have proof?

DEE
Check the balance on the ATM.

BART
This is bullshit. I'm in charge
here!

ETHAN
If you're innocent, you got nothing
to lose by letting her check.

He's out-numbered. The cop nods at Gutterfemme.

She goes to the ATM. Ethan quietly pops the briefcase's latches and peeks. It's filled with bags of WHITE POWDER.

GUTTERFEMME
OVERDRAWN BY \$3500! All withdrawals
made from this bar today!

NATALEE
It's an old scam. Bart turned your
credit into cash and then lost it
on the floor like a fucking retard.

She snorts. Bart fumes.

OFFICER DOUVERT

Well, it's a good thing I stopped
in here, isn't it?

(to Bart)

Put 'em out. Wrists.

BART

You can't be fucking serious.

She pulls snaps handcuffs onto him. Behind everyone, Ethan
pats the cash in his pocket and slowly steps backwards
towards the door and EXITS with the briefcase.

*
*

BART (cont'd)

I'm the manager here. Without me
there's nobody to run the place!

Freddy enters, cackling.

FREDDY

Woah. What's going on HERE?

*

DEE

Freddy! Can you work Bart's shift?

FREDDY

Why the fuck not!

Freddy goes over to the bar.

BART

Fuck you, Dee. We're through. No
more gigs here ever again!

Dee heads back to the stage.

134

INT. CZECK'S STAGE - CONTINUOUS

134

The band never stopped playing.

DEE

Whatever! Fuck it! Rock stars don't
have kids! Woo!

SMITTY

Dee, was that the guy?

DEE

Nah. But he's coming soon. Let's
make it a good night, I gotta get
me \$200.

*

She resumes singing. Smitty and the boys shrug.

135 **INT. CZECK'S DOORWAY - SAME TIME** 135

GUTTERFEMME

Let's go. I'm pressing charges.

BART

This is bullshit! I'm a pillar of
the community!

The Cop escorts them out.

136 **INT. CZECK'S BAR - CONTINUOUS** 136

Freddy is confused.

FREDDY

What the fuck just happened?

Everyone but the band is now at the bar. Natalee joins them.

THE KID

Excuse me. Is... um... Is this normal
for this bar?

OLD MAN DILLARD

It's okay for a Wednesday.

A loud BZZZZT from offscreen.

FREDDY

Hey kid. Your laundry's ready.

PULL BACK WIDE as the Kid heads to the laundromat area.

NATALEE

Jameson, Freddy.

FREDDY

On the house, sugar.

He puts out shot glasses.

One for her. One for Old Man Dillard. *

Two for the Dancers. Four for the band. *

One for himself. Cheers. *

FADE TO BLACK