

RATS
by
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INT: APARTMENT - DAY

Afternoon. Living room.

JACK on an armchair; JILL on the couch, looking at a magazine. Jack tries to get her attention by a word spoken with deliberate apparent casualness.

JACK
Rats...

JILL
Huh ?

JACK
Rats...

JILL (looking up)
What - ?

JACK
Rats...

Jill puts the magazine down open face up, on a page with an advertisement for a Toyota sports coupe. She is paying attention now, though is more irritated than interested.

JILL
Did I hear you right ?

JACK
Er...

JILL
Did you say "rats" ?

JACK (matter-of-fact)
Yes...that's what I said..

Jill looks sharply at Jack, who tries to turn his eyes slightly to the side, to miss the intensity of her stare.

JILL
You said "rats" ?

JACK (timidly)
I guess I did.

JILL
Why ?

Jack looks like he regrets starting this conversation.

JILL
Why did you say "rats" ?

JACK
Well, I guess..I'm not happy..

JILL
You're not happy ?

Jack shrugs.

JACK
I guess not.

JILL
Why aren't you happy ?

JACK
Well, I just realised, the whole
of my life, I never did what I
wanted..

JILL
Whose fault is that, then ?

JACK
Mine...it must be my fault.

JILL
And what are you gonna do about it ?

JACK
I guess, I gotta, assert myself, to
get what I want.

JILL
What do you want ?

JACK
I wanna run a diner.

JILL (exasperated)
Why ?

JACK
I just, like the idea.

JILL
The idea's fine; the reality..

She shakes her head.

JACK
Rats...

JILL
Jack...

Jill sighs.

JILL
...I want you to be happy, but,
a diner...no.

JACK
Why not ?

JILL
There's so many reasons why not.

Jack looks dejected.

Jill sighs.

JILL

Jack, there's just no way we should consider running a diner.

Jack looks depressed and leans his cheek on his closed fist, his elbow on the arm of his armchair.

JILL

Jack, you know how much I care for you, how much I want you to be happy; but, there are limits. Another thing: "rats"...it's just not the sort of phrase you should use, nowadays.

JACK

What's wrong with it ?

JILL

Nobody says that..."Rats" is like something out of a George Raft film; "rats", it's like something James Cagney might say: "you dirty rat".

JACK

He never said that.

JILL

That is not the type of language people use nowadays.

JACK

What do they say ?

JILL

A normal person nowadays, they say, "shit", "piss", "fuck", "cocksucker", "motherfucker", "cunt"...

Jack shakes his head and sighs.

JACK

Those words are, obscene, rude and very unladylike.

JILL

Instead of "rats", why don't you say, "fucking hell shit", like any normal person ?

JACK

I don't like them words... they're, disgusting...

JILL

Bullshit ! That's another one - common parlance nowadays.

JACK

I don't like that sort o' language. Talking like that is, disrespectful.

Jill sighs.

JILL

If I call you a cunt; okay, it's not nice, but it ain't disrespectful, not if everyone uses it nowadays.

JACK

I would never use language like that.

JILL

You're an old-fashioned gentleman; but you gotta move with the times.

JACK

That's why I want to buy and run a diner.

JILL

That might've been a reasonable ambition years ago, but it ain't what people are moving into, not nowadays.

JACK

What are people moving into... nowadays ?

JILL

Computers, mobile phones, that sort o' thing; not food. There's no money in food, not nowadays.

JACK

Well, I like the idea.

JILL

Well, I don't.

A beat.

JACK

Jill, do you realise how insulting swear words are to women ?

JILL

How is that ?

JACK

They're very misogynist. The C-word, describing a woman's private parts; then, "son-of-a-bitch", implying the guy's mother was a "bitch". Then, "mother...er...", implying the guy's mother was prepared to have sex with her own son. Even, that word implies the guy's illegitimate; it's really an insult to the guy's parentage... all very insulting, primarily to, woman.

JILL

Shut up, Jack.

A beat.

JILL

You know, Jack, sometimes you simply are a cunt.

Jack shakes his head.

JACK

No. I do not have a C-word; therefore, I am not one; I could not possibly be a C-word.

JILL

You don't haf-ta have a cunt, to be a cunt.

JACK

That's inaccurate.

JILL

You know, I saw that clip on Youtube, that woman soccer player, when she got a rough tackle, a foul, she said, "Fuck you, you prick." Now, if that was two men, he would say, "Fuck you, you cunt."

JACK

What are you saying ?

JILL

We should not over-analyse the use of curse words.

JACK

I "curse" you...

JILL

No, you don't. Should I call you a "prick", instead of the C-word ?

JACK

It would be more gender-specific.

JILL

Then, there was that woman on the tee vee, that presenter, who said, "Cunt", and she said, "I'm so sorry; I've never said that before in my life; it's usually men that say that."

JACK

Cross-gender stereotyping, is not a good idea.

JILL

Jack, you are an ass-hole.

JACK

That ain't nice, neither.

JILL
It's true, though.

JACK
I don't know about that. What I do know is, a person cannot be, an A-hole.

Jill giggles, as she finds this amusing.

JILL
You know what a fart is ?

JACK
It's an expulsion of gas from the -

JILL
"A-hole..."

JACK
- The rectum.

JILL
Farts come from ass-holes...

JACK
Rectums...

Jill laughs.

JACK
What's funny about that ?

JILL
I think "rectum" sounds ruder than "ass-hole".

JACK
The word used for the expulsion of gas from the rectum, is..rude.

JILL
It's funny...

JACK
No, it's just rude.

JILL
"Fart" is funny...

Jill giggles.

JILL
I'm sorry, Jack, you're just too.. old-fashioned, too, passe.

JACK
I can't help that.

JILL
I know.

Jill sighs.

JILL
Okay, let's see if we can do
better...

JACK
I'll try...

CUT TO:

INT: KITCHEN - DAY

Next day. Morning. Jack at the table, eating cereal; Jill pouring coffee,
standing near the counter.

JACK (looking up)
I wanna..delicatessen.

JILL
You wanna go to a delicatessen ?

JACK
I wanna run a delicatessen...

Jill slams down the coffee-maker and turns to look at him.

JILL
Are you out-ta your fucking mind ?

JACK
I...just - what's wrong with wanting
to own a deli ?

JILL
It's fucking nuts !

She leaves the boiling cup of coffee on the counter and sits down at the
table and looks him straight in the face.

JACK
Why you say that ?

JILL
What is it with you ? Huh ?

JACK
Me ?

JILL
Yes, you - you're fucking nuts !

JACK
Says you -

JILL
Yes, says me..you wanna know why,
huh, you wanna know why ?

JACK
Why ?

Jill sighs.

JILL
Because you, Jack, are obsessed
with food...You are tiring my
patience.

JACK
I'm sorry, if that's the case.

JILL
Your obsession with food...you
can't make money out-ta food in
this day and age.

Jack looks like he does not accept what she has said.

JILL
Okay, you gotta have delis, diners,
cafes, doughnut shops, pizza hut,
hamburger joints, even subways;
someone's gotta run places like
that, but, it don't haf-ta be you !

JACK
You are just temperamentally unsuited
to working in food.

JILL
You think you got the patience to
run a deli, a diner, a hamburger
joint ?

JACK
I reckon, I could do that.

JILL
You're insane.

A beat.

JILL
Food, food businesses, don't make
money.

JACK
C'mon ! MacDonalds, Pizza Hut, Subway,
millionaires, heck, billionaires...

JILL
You know how they operate, they sell
franchises, that's how they make money.

JACK
I know that - I ain't stupid...

JILL
The average owner, delicatessen, burger
joint, what have you, they make enough
to get by, they don't make a fortune.

JACK
Who wants a fortune ? I just want, a nice
little place, making a nice little profit,

JACK (cont'd)
that's enough for me.

JILL
You're easily satisfied. You gotta
invest the money -

JACK
I don't need a fortune - I don't even
wanna be a millionaire.

Jill stands and paces around, looking down at Jack, huffing and puffing at him.

JILL
The money we got, we should invest,
not throw it away in a diner that's
gonna fail...

JACK
How do you know, it's gonna fail ?

Jill sighs.

JACK
I just wanna make a decent living;
I wanna get involved; I wanna run
a nice little diner...

JILL
Put the money into government bonds
even the Dow...

JACK
I don't wanna do that...

JILL
I do ! What I want is us, together,
not a diner. You wouldn't have any
time for me...

Jill sits down again, a little calmer.

JILL
You run a business, it's all about
the business; no time for romance.

JACK
I will always find time for you.

Jill shakes her head.

JILL
No, you won't. Once you start running
a diner, it will take you over.

JACK
I'll get staff, to run the place.

JILL
You'll neglect everything else, for
that God-damn diner !

JACK
I won't; I promise you.

JILL
You will.

A beat.

JILL
I love you, Jack; I love you just the way you are. I don't want any complications. I don't want this diner !

JACK
We can still be together. I'll get staff to run the place, on a daily basis...

JILL
I know you - your pride and joy. You will neglect me !

JACK
I won't ! I promise you, I won't !

Jill stands and goes back to the counter, where she pours some milk into her coffee cup and drinks. She turns to look at Jack, holding her coffee cup. She sighs. She puts her coffee cup down on the counter.

JILL
Jack, Jack, why do men do their own thing ? Why can't they just be happy, they've got a woman at home who loves them ? Why do they haf-ta prove themselves, with one mad scheme or another ?

JACK
This is not about proving myself, to anyone...

JILL
Don't tell me you're doing this to safeguard my financial future - you're doing this because you want to...

JACK
What's wrong with that ?

JILL
It's selfish.

JACK
Is it ?

JILL
It sure is.

JACK
Well, for once in my life, I will

JACK (cont'd)
 haf-ta be selfish. I wanna run
 a diner, with a delicatessen,
 where you can get some cherry
 pie, or even a burger, where
 the customers are happy with
 the service, and recommend it
 to their colleagues...

JILL
 Pie in the sky !

JACK
 Pie on the plate, with cream...
 could be cherry pie, or apple
 pie...could be pouring cream,
 could be spray cream...what
 the customer wants.

JILL
 You're obsessed with this notion,
 you'll make money out-ta food...

JACK
 I am not obsessed...

JILL
 Yes, you are.

Jill picks up her coffee cup, takes another sip, then carries it over to
 the table, where she sits down.

JILL
 Jack, I just don't think this is
 a good idea.

JACK
 Well, I do.

JILL
 No, it's your father, it's his
 obsession with food, making money
 out-ta food, that's his idea, and
 you just got, influenced by his
 obsession, that's what it is.

JACK
 This is my idea.

JILL
 Is it ? Is it really ? I doubt it.

A beat.

JILL
 Your father always had that fantasy,
 he would be a millionaire, making
 money out-ta food. It didn't quite
 work out like that, did it ? What
 happened to his dream ? A chain of
 cafes, a thousand diners all across
 the country. What's the reality ?

JILL (cont'd)
He couldn't run one single solitary
diner !

JACK
He had bad luck.

JILL
No. He didn't have the temperament
to run a decent business.

JACK
I got the temperament. I could do it.
I'll find me a nice little diner, and
I will make it successful.

A beat.

JILL
Another thing, which they don't
advertise, when they're selling
a diner..vermin.

JACK
Vermin - ?

JILL
Rats...

JACK (amused)
Rats...that's what I said...

JILL
There's an epidemic of rats around
the fast food joints, including
diners.

JACK
Rats don't have epidemics - they got
plagues...you say, "a plague of rats".

JILL
Well, they got fucking plagues of rats
all over the fast food joints.

Jill stands.

She holds onto the top of the chair, and looks down at Jack.

Jack slowly and carefully rises from his chair, and tries to assert himself as calmly as possible. He turns a little from Jill, trying not to look directly at her.

JACK
We can take care of any rats. Put
poison down.

JILL
A few, not a plague of rats all
around the trash cans. Tens, dozens
of rats. They live in sewers; they
got disease. It's not safe.

JACK
I'm gonna run a diner.

A beat.

JILL
You ever met a rat, face-to-face ?

JACK
No.

JILL
You will if you run a diner.

Jill goes out.

Jack sits down.

CUT TO:

INT: HOUSE - DAY

Living room. Jack and his father, BILL, in Bill's place.

Bill is a little crumpled in his armchair, but still vigorous, despite using a walking stick, which is at the side of the chair. Jack stands out of respect.

JACK
So, how you been, Pop ?

BILL (barely looking at
him; a little gloomily)

Okay, I guess. You ?

JACK
I been okay...

Later:

The kitchen: Bill seated, his walking stick on the arm of the kitchen-table chair. Jack stands near the counter.

JACK
She won't give me the money to
buy a diner.

BILL
Stupid bitch !

JACK
I tried reasoning with her, but,
she just won't have it.

BILL
Typical female - they think they
know stuff, but they don't know
shit.

JACK
She's got half the money, and I
don't have enough on my own, to

JACK (cont'd)

buy a place. She says, put the money in stocks and shares. She says, I'd just lose the money in a diner.

BILL

You ain't never gonna do nothing, boy, if you don't stand up for yourself, and put women in their place.

JACK

I do stand up for myself. I'm not so sure, putting women in their place, is the answer.

BILL

It helps. Women are too cautious. They never take risks. They always take the easy way out; do nothing. You tell Jill, you're the man of the household, and she has to fall in line.

JACK

We're not in the military, Pop.

Jack sits at the table, at the other end from Bill.

BILL

Jack, my boy, you gotta tell your stupid wife...

He trails off.

Bill puts his hand on the top of his walking stick and raises it off the floor. He holds it up in the air and brandishes it.

BILL

Women ! They stop you doing anything !
A man..has to be, a man.

Bill lowers his stick to the ground and leans it against the table, then lets go of it.

BILL

Your mother was the same - stupid bitch ! Couldn't stand her ! Never got her to do nothing...Never got her to do Jack shit. That's why I divorced the bitch...

JACK

I thought she divorced you...

BILL

Whatever...Women, they just want a man to stay at home, and kiss them; romance them, tell them what a good cook they are; tell them how beautiful they are; all

BILL (cont'd)

that crap...Compliment them on their make-up, shit like that. They are so shallow, so easy to please, if you stay at home; so easy to flatter; so easy to keep them happy, if you do what they say, if that little voice of theirs can command the activities of a man. They dominate us with their domestic bliss. A man has to go out into the world and make a life for himself. A man can run a business, make money for himself, and his little wife; and if she don't like it, chuck her out and find yourself a more accommodating companion.

JACK

Another wife - ?

BILL

A nice slut of a girl, someone to suck your dick and tell you how good you are, in business, and in bed. She never did that, your bitch of a mother, my ex-wife. They think they know best, and what's more, they want daughters to copy their behaviour, the way they treat their men. You were a disappointment to your mother because you were a son, not her precious daughter -

JACK

- She never had none -

BILL

- Believe me, if she had a daughter, that girl would be her favourite, no matter how many sons she had; even if her daughter was a lousy badly-behaved bitch, - in her mother's eyes, she was an angel...no matter how well her son behaved, he would be a disappointment; she would tell him off, and tell him to be more like his wonderful sister.

JACK

Women tend to favour daughters; it's natural affinity.

BILL

It's downright favouritism, and it stinks.

JACK

Men would tend to favour sons.

BILL

I had a sister like that, and I always hated her. I resented the fact that my mother allowed her to get away with

BILL (cont'd)
 everything; she never let me get away with, anything. She always told me off; she never told her off. Even now, it makes me mad, just to think of it.

JACK
 I never had a sister.

BILL
 You're lucky. Sometimes, I think, if she had never been born, I would've had a better life.

JACK
 You don't like women much, do you, Pop ?

BILL
 I hate them.

A beat.

JACK
 What am I gonna do, Pop ?

BILL
 Food...food is where it's at..food. You run a decent diner, you could become, a millionaire. I always wanted to be, a millionaire, but I never quite got there. You still got a chance to make it big. You know, if I wasn't married to that bitch, your mother, I would've been a millionaire. Your wife is what's stopping you reaching your potential.

Jack sighs.

Later: Living-room:

Bill in his armchair with his trusty weapon, his walking stick laid across the arms on the chair, on top of his stomach, with his hand on the handle. Jack stands.

JACK
 Gotta persuade her somehow.

BILL
 - It's her money ?

JACK
 No - it's our money...

BILL
 You mean in a join account ?

JACK
 Yeah -

BILL
Both got access withdraw pay in money ?

JACK
Yeah...

BILL
Any amount ?

JACK
Any amount...

BILL
I see.

Bill smiles as he schemes.

BILL
You could just take it all out, buy
the diner, and tell her later.

JACK
I could never do that.

BILL
You ain't got the guts.

JACK
Ain't a matter of guts; it's about
respect and courtesy, and love.

BILL
You love her ?

JACK
I do.

BILL
She love you ?

JACK
She does.

BILL
Then, she needs ta learn, humility.

JACK
That's, not her style.

BILL
If I were you, I'd humble her.

JACK
That was all in the past, when
a wife would be humble, do what
her husband told her. A modern
woman has a mind of her own.

BILL
Modern women don't respect their
husbands.

JACK
They do; it's just a different
type of respect.

BILL
What happened to, "...love, honour
and obey...?"

JACK
That is seriously out-of-date.

BILL
Your mother, she became..she got
a will of her own. That's when we
began to, fall apart. I hated her
for that...

JACK
- Because she would not obey you ?

BILL
Disobedience, in a female, ain't
nice, ain't nice at all. She had
a mind of her own. That broke us
up. She didn't understand, a man
has to be obeyed in his own house.
She, disrespected me. Make sure
your wife does not, disrespect you.

JACK
Okay...

CUT TO:

INT: APARTMENT - DAY

Living room. Jack and Jill.

Jill is holding the magazine with an advertisement for a Toyota sports
coupe in her hand as she closes in on Jack, who seated on an armchair.

JILL
Jack ?

JACK
Yeah - ?

JILL
I was thinking, of buying a new car.

JACK
New car ?

JILL
Yeah - Toyota...

JACK
That's Japanese...

JILL
I know that.

Jack frowns, dismissively.

JACK
That would be..unpatriotic...Buy
American. Buy a Chrysler.

JILL
I don't wanna fucking Chrysler,
I wanna Toyota.

JACK
Why ?

JILL
Because I like the look of it...
Toyota sports coupe.

JACK
A coupe ?

JILL
Yes, a fucking coupe !

JACK
Please, don't use that language.

JILL
Everyone else does.

JACK
I don't..

JILL
Well, you're a freak.

A beat.

JACK
I went to see Bill -

JILL (sarcastically)
Your father -

JACK
Yes, my father. You know what he
said - ?

JILL
No. What's more, I don't wanna
know, what he said.

JACK
I'll tell you anyway..

JILL
That must be like listening to
the Misogynist Manifesto..

JACK
He said, I should, assert myself..

Jill laughs.

Jack frowns.

JILL

You ? Assert yourself ? You cannot be serious.

JACK

I am..serious. He said, I should not live to resent you.

JILL

Why should you resent me ?

JACK

I want that diner -

JILL

- And I want that Toyota coupe !

JACK

We don't have the money for both. We gotta choose which one to invest in; and, a diner is a better bet.

JILL

It could fail. It could bankrupt us.

JACK

Cars depreciate in value..

JILL

Says the accountant.

JACK

They do. They lose value.

JILL

Diners lose money.

JACK

Mine won't.

A beat.

JACK

I told him, to let go of his resentment.

JILL

It's the losers of this world who are resentful.

JACK

The winners have nothing to resent.

JILL

Your father is a loser. Don't be like him.

JACK

If we buy a diner, I will be, a winner.

JILL

I want that coupe !

JACK
I want a diner.

JILL
Fuck you, Jack. You're being unreasonable.

Jill storms out.

CUT TO:

INT: HOUSE - DAY

Bill's place. Living room.

Jack and Bill, both standing.

BILL
Toyota ?! A fucking Toyota ?

JACK
That's what she wants...

BILL
Why does she want a fucking Toyota ?

JACK
A coupe...a Toyota sports coupe...

BILL
Stupid bitch ! An American woman should buy an American car, not a God-damn Toyota ! A Chrysler, Buick, a Chevrolet. I had a fifty-seven Chevrolet, a Chevy...

JACK
Dad ?

BILL
What ?

JACK
What am I gonna do ?

BILL
I can't have my daughter-in-law buying a Japanese car !

Jack looks at Bill.

BILL
Buying a new car is just selfish. You buying a diner, now, that's responsible...you're doing it to secure her financial future.

JACK
That's what I told her. I could not impress on her how much she would benefit from having a diner as a source of income.

BILL

That reinforces my belief that women are fundamentally stupid - even when you're doing something for them, they don't get it. You run a decent diner, you could buy her that Toyota from the profits, if she still wanted it. Sometimes, women just make me despair. They don't understand commerce. People haf-ta eat...

JACK

Sure...

BILL

They want a nice place to eat; they want nice food, good service. Food is secure...food makes money. I'll persuade her, she don't need no car - what she needs, is to appreciate what a decent guy you are, how lucky she is, to have you as her husband, a sensitive, caring individual, who is only concerned for her happiness; who would do anything, to please her.

JACK

That's what I am.

BILL

Not everyone can be happy. We all gotta make sacrifices, compromises, for the good of us all. One person can focus on what needs to be done, for our benefit. That person, in this instance, is you. Everyone's got dreams. Only some people can achieve their dreams. You gotta, go for it.

JACK

Pop, you persuaded me.

BILL

I'll get to work.

CUT TO:

INT: GARAGE - DAY

Bill with a mechanic friend, BOB, who is working on a car. Bill stands, leaning on his walking stick. Bob is busy underneath the car, lying on his back on a mechanic's trolley, his legs sticking out by the side of the car, his face not visible.

By the side of trolley, near Bob's legs, an opened toolbox with various tools, an oil can, and some rags. The bonnet of the car is open.

BOB

Fifteen - we're talking, no

BOB (cont'd)
 action...
 BILL
 Uh-huh...
 BOB
 Twenty - now, that depends...

BILL
 Depends...?

BOB
 That's where factors come in...

BILL
 Such as - ?

BOB
 The precise circumstances of the
 accident - angles..bonnet height,
 which part of the body gets hit...

BILL
 Uh-huh...

Bob rolls from under the car, his feet first, then his legs, his waist, his chest, his arms, his hands working him out towards Bill, with the small wheels of the trolley turning as his face emerges, covered in dirt and oil.

Having rolled himself out, Bob gets to his feet. He picks up a rag from the tool box and wipes his face and then his hands. He picks up a small tool which he left on the edge of the trolley and puts it back in the toolbox.

Bill looks at Bob.

BILL
 What would you recommend ?

BOB
 Sometimes, twenty is not enough.
 Twenty-five, we're getting there.
 To be certain, I would suggest,
 twenty-seven miles per hour, but,
 don't go up to thirty; that would
 be, dangerous. I recommend twenty-
 seven, for the type of injuries
 you want; for a person to need
 a few months in hospital. Gotta
 watch that speedometer real close.

BILL
 You understand, this discussion is,
 hypothetical ?

Bob takes out a dirty rag to wipe his dirty hands in a gesture that seems to say he is washing his hands of any consequences that result from this conversation.

Bob looks at Bill.

BOB
I understand.

BILL
Accidents happen.

BOB
They sure do.

Bill turns away from Bob and smiles as he goes out of the garage.

CUT TO:

EXT: STREET - DAY

Jill out shopping, standing at the street corner, about to cross the road, holding shopping bags.

INT: CAR - DAY

Bill sees Jill up ahead through the front window-screen.

He looks down at the speedometer reading 17 mph, crawling along. Jill tentatively steps out onto the road surface.

Bill suddenly has a demonic mad gleam in his eyes, which almost seem to burst and become blood-red. He presses down on the accelerator pedal and presses his hands into the steering wheel as the speedometer races up to 30 mph, then 35.

She's getting closer and larger in the front window-screen but does not seem to see the danger. Bill looks like he is going to kill her, with crazy eyes ! Then, suddenly, he hears Bob's voice.

BOB (V.O.)
Twenty-seven...

Bill slams down on the brakes as he hits Jill side on at 27 mph. Bill sees Jill appear to be thrown upwards from the bonnet.

EXT: STREET - DAY

Jill is sent flying forwards, but as the car is also moving forwards, and, although it is braking, it is still moving faster than her, she appears to be thrown backwards over the bonnet and towards the left side onto the road, with her body hitting the surface, then collapsing into a heap with her torso, head and legs resting near the edge of the pavement.

The car turns the corner and disappears.

INT: CAR - DAY

Bill presses down hard on the accelerator pedal as the speedometer races past 50, to 60, to 70 mph, anything to get the car as far away as possible.

EXT: STREET - DAY

People gather round Jill's crumpled body, and a man takes out a mobile phone to call for an ambulance.

Jill whimpers and moans in pain.

CUT TO:

INT: HOUSE - DAY

Bill's place.

Hallway. Bill and Jack, just inside the door.

BILL
How did it happen ?

JACK
Ah, some maniac come from nowhere,
slam right into her.

BILL
I'm sorry, Jack -

JACK
Catch the son-of-a-bitch done this,
I'll kill him !

BILL
Could've been worse.

JACK
Huh ?

BILL
She could've been dead...

Jack looks puzzled.

BILL
I mean, she..might've been lucky..

JACK
"Lucky - ?!" Hospital six months...

BILL
Yeah, but at least she's alive.
Count your blessings.

JACK
I guess you're right.

BILL
Look on the bright side - she don't
need that Toyota no more.

JACK
I guess not.

Bill puts his arm around Jack and leads him into the living room.

INT: LIVING ROOM - DAY

Bill appearing to comfort Jack.

BILL
So, you can use the money to buy
that diner - remember, you're doing
it for her, to safeguard her financial
future, pay for her, recovery...

Jack is still upset, but smiles a little at the mention of "diner".

BILL

She come out-ta hospital...

JACK

Six months, they said...

BILL

You'll have that diner up and running, making money, secure income, enough to pay for all her treatment, recuperation; she'll appreciate that, when she comes home. You need that money, to make her recovery comfortable. She'll even say, what a good idea it was to put the money into a food business. She will love you, even more.

JACK

I hope so...

BILL

She will thank you for buying that diner, for looking after her, being a decent husband.

Jack smiles.

BILL

That's better.

JACK

Who did this ?

BILL

Kids...I find out who done this, I'll kill 'em.

A beat.

JACK

Thanks, Pop, for all you've done.

CUT TO:

INT: DINER - DAY

A few months later. Jack has his diner.

Customers eating, waitresses serving, Jack happily minding the till.

A waitress, TRACY, is bringing over a tray of food. Suddenly, a customer rises and causes the food to fly off the tray onto a number of customers. Tracy is covered in food, but the customer who knocked into her, MARK, does not have a mark on him. Mark scowls at Tracy.

MARK

You stupid cunt !

Tracy is upset.

TRACY
I'm sorry...

MARK
"Sorry" - sorry's not good enough,
you stupid cunt ! Look at my suit !

TRACY
Sir ?

MARK
You've ruined it !

TRACY
Have I ?

MARK
Yes, you have, you stupid cunt !
Are you blind, huh ? Are you
fucking blind ?

Jack comes over from behind the counter.

JACK
Sir, what seems to be the problem ?

MARK
"Seems ?" - ain't "seems". It fucking
well is !

JACK
What's the problem ?

MARK
This stupid cunt of a waitress -

JACK
There's no need for that type of
language...

MARK
Fuck you, you ass-hole !

JACK
Not in the presence of ladies.

MARK
What ladies ? This stupid cunt !?

JACK
Tracy ?

TRACY
Yes, Jack ?

JACK
You okay ?

TRACY
I'm okay.

Tracy puts on a slight smile to assure Jack she is okay.

MARK
She's okay, but I ain't ! look
at my suit !

JACK
Nice suit...

MARK
Wise guy, Huh ? Listen, smart ass,
look at my suit ! It cost two hundred
dollars.

JACK
We'll pay to have it cleaned, if we
can find any mark on it.

MARK
You think I'm an ass-hole ?

JACK
No, sir, -

MARK
I ain't an ass-hole !

JACK
I'm sure you're not.

MARK
I work in stocks.

TRACY
Wow !

MARK
Yeah - I am a person of some
importance, not like you, you
piece of shit...

JACK
You talking to her ?

MARK
Yes, I am...

JACK
Calling her a piece of, doo-doo ?

MARK
I didn't call her a piece of "doo-doo",
I called her a piece of shit.

JACK
So, it's alright to treat her like
dirt ? Get out-ta here !

MARK
Fuck you !

JACK
Out-ta here. My staff will be treated
with courtesy, by all customers, at all

JACK (cont'd)
times. Out !

MARK
You'll be hearing from my lawyers.

JACK
Out - now !

Mark leaves, angry and disgruntled.

JACK
How dare he speak to you like that !
How dare he ?

TRACY
I'm just a waitress...

JACK
You should be treated with respect.

TRACY
Thanks, Jack.

Jack addresses the other customer.

JACK
Okay, folks, we'll pay for cleaning,
if anyone's genuinely got a stain on
their clothes.

Some customers have stains on their clothes, but they shake their heads, impressed by the way Jack stood up for Tracy, and perhaps scared he might throw them out.

Jack inspects the clothes of a MAN with some stains, then looks up at the other customers.

JACK
You get them cleaned, and give me
the bill.

MAN
Okay.

Some other customers then indicate they have stains on them.

MAN
He should pay for it. He knocked
into her. It was his fault.

JACK
He's banned.

Tracy looks relieved.

CUT TO:

INT: DINER - NIGHT

After hours. Tracy and Jack at a table, sipping coffees.

Tracy looks up at Jack and smiles.

JACK
That's better. Don't let him
upset you.

TRACY
I'm not..upset.

JACK
You were...

Tracy admits he was upset.

TRACY
I was...

JACK
How dare he treat you like that !
How dare he ! I hate that; I just
hate that, someone thinks they're
so superior, they treat someone
else like dirt ! I really hate that !
That attitude - it stinks ! That
arrogance ! He's thinks he's better
than you - he ain't ! You're better
than him, because you know how to
treat people, with respect and
courtesy.

TRACY
Jack, I'm a waitress.

JACK
You got good manners. You're polite.
I chose you, because I could see,
you knew how to behave, you knew
how to treat people...

Tracy looks at Jack.

JACK
He's mistaken if he thinks I'm
intimidated.

Tracy sighs.

TRACY
Thanks, Jack.

She sips her coffee.

JACK
I don't believe, he works in
stocks...I don't believe that
suit cost two hundred dollars.

TRACY
Jack, he's made you really angry.

JACK
Yes, he has.

She smiles a little, but beneath it, she is still upset.

JACK

He ain't a trader, he ain't in stocks and shares. They don't have time for lunch. They get it sent up to them. They're always looking at the screen. They don't go to diners.

TRACY

You reckon - ?

JACK

He was trying it on, suing us for ruining his suit !

TRACY

There wasn't a spot on him.

JACK

Trying to rip us off...I paid the other customers' cleaning bills...

TRACY

I'm sorry, Jack -

JACK

Not your fault...it was his fault - I got a good mind to sue him, if I ever see him again; which I probably won't, since I banned him...

Later:

Coffee cups drained, tired eyes; Tracy lingering a little.

TRACY

Gotta go home, I guess.

Tracy gets up.

JACK

Yeah - okay - uh, Tracy...

TRACY

Yeah ?

JACK

Wife's coming tomorrow...

TRACY

Uh-huh...

JACK

Want things just right for her, you know, she's just out the hospital.

TRACY

How is she ?

JACK
 She's fine - she just needs
 a little help, you know, for
 a few months. Show her the place,
 make her proud of me...

TRACY
 She should be proud o' you, Jack,
 because you're a real decent man.

JACK
 Thanks, Tracy.

TRACY
 I'll make it real nice for her...

JACK
 Thanks.

Tracy goes to the door.

TRACY
 'Bye, Jack.

JACK
 'Bye, Trace - see you tomorrow.

Tracy goes out.

Jack goes to the till, and opens it. He smiles with satisfaction as the takings seem substantial.

CUT TO:

INT: DINER - DAY

The door opens, Jack helps Jill inside. Jill is wearing a neck-brace and walks with crutches.

JILL
 Gotta do it myself, Jack.

JACK
 Okay.

JILL
 I gotta get my independence back -
 can't rely on people...

JACK
 You can rely on me.

JILL
 I know..

JACK
 Here okay ?

JILL
 Yep.

They sit down at a table. Jill's eyes wander. Jack's eyes follow Jill's as she looks around the diner.

JACK
What d'you think ?

JILL
Nice - real nice.

JACK
Making good money.

Jill takes notice of the many customers in the diner, at tables. She manages a slight smile, to show approval of Jack's enterprise, then drops the smile to address her situation.

JILL
I'm worried...

JACK
Why ?

JILL
Got medical bills to pay.

JACK
I'll take care o' those. One of the reasons I bought this diner, with our money, was to make sure I could pay all your medical bills. There's nothing to worry about...

JILL
Thanks, Jack.

Jack takes her hand and holds it.

JACK
Don't worry...

JILL
I'm worried about my future...I'm not sure I'm gonna be the person I was before the accident. I don't know how much my personality might change. A complete recovery just means, I don't need to be seen by the specialist no more, out of what they call, "clinical need"; don't mean I'll be the same, like it never happened. I'm gonna think, what might I have done, if I'd never had those injuries ? That, I'll never know.

JACK
I will always support you...

JILL
You're a decent man. Just, I don't wanna become dependent. I will be able to walk without my crutches within a few months, but I will always need pain-killers...

JACK
That's..unfortunate..

JILL
Sure is..unfortunate. Don't know
what I'd do without you, Jack.

A beat.

JACK
So, was I right, or was I right,
about buying a diner ?

JILL
You were right.

JACK
Told you. Now, what would you
like to eat ?

JILL
Me ?

JACK
Yes, you. I didn't just bring
you here to look at the place;
I want you to taste our cuisine.

JILL
Well, I gotta watch what I eat.

Jack looks at her.

JILL
Can't put too much weight on my
hip...

JACK
Er...yeah...I gotta remember that.
How about, some cherry pie, and
a cup of coffee ?

JILL
Just..the cup of coffee, please.

JACK
Sure...Tracy will take your order.
Trace !

Tracy appears from behind the counter.

TRACY
Yes, sir ?

JACK
Tracy, I'd like you to meet my wife..

Tracy comes over to their table.

JILL
I'm Jill..

TRACY
I'm Tracy...

They shake hands.

TRACY
Nice to meet you.

JILL
Nice to meet you, Tracy.

TRACY
What can I get you ?

JILL
Er...cup of coffee, please.

TRACY
Anything to eat ?

JILL
Just, the coffee, please.

Tracy is a little excited by the prospect of serving Jack's wife, out of her respect and fondness for Jack.

TRACY
How strong d'you like your coffee ?
Strong or weak ?

JILL
Medium, please. Two sweeteners.

TRACY
Medium coffee, coming right up.

Tracy sweeps away, smiling, and goes back behind the counter to get the order ready, ignoring other written orders which are hung up on revolving boards.

JILL (looking around)
Nice girl. Very polite.

JACK
She sure is.

JILL
Jack, believe me when I say this;
I'm very grateful for all you've
done for me...including buying
this place.

JACK
I did it for you.

JILL
I know. You're a very good man.

Jack looks a little embarrassed by this praise.

Tracy returns with the cup of coffee on a tray, and puts it down on the table.

JILL
Thanks, Tracy.

TRACY
It's a pleasure to serve you.

Tracy goes back to the counter.

Jill takes a sip of her coffee.

JILL
Umm, nice.

A beat.

JILL
I regret what happened to me.
I curse the circumstances that
led to the accident I suffered.
Shopping on that particular day.
I was in the wrong place at the
wrong time. Odd how things turn
out. I was gonna buy that Toyota.
Then, fate kinda intervened.

JACK
We can still buy that Toyota, if
you wish, with the profits from
this place.

JILL
I think I'll give that a miss
for now.

JACK
Okay.

Later:

Jill sips the dregs of her coffee.

JILL
Jack, who did this to me ?

JACK
Hit and run...

JILL
That's what the cops said.

JACK
They got any leads ?

JILL
Nah - spoke to Lieutenant Atkins,
said, he'd haf-ta close down the
investigation. He said, they got
limited resources.

JACK
What are you gonna do ?

JILL

I regret what happened. I even resent what happened. I'd like someone to take responsibility, for doing this to me. I'd like to know, who done it. Someone is to blame. If I can't get restitution - which I can't - I know that now - the damage is permanent - I want at least some resolution. It's no good to think, someone has just gotten away with injuring me, with changing my life, for the worse, with taking away from me my right to self-determination.

JACK

Yes; you do need to identify who done this to you.

JILL

Okay. Now, I gotta use the John.

JACK

We do have all the facilities, including a disabled John, with support bars, to lower you down.

Jill looks around, until Jack points out the disabled toilet.

JACK

Over there.

JILL

Thanks.

Jill gets up, using her crutches.

JACK

You didn't see the sign ?

JILL

My eyes ain't too good no more.

JACK

Maybe you should see an eye specialist.

She looks at him.

JILL

You think so ?

JACK

It might be something to do with the accident.

Jill snuffles, takes out a handkerchief and wipes her watery eyes.

JACK

I'm sorry.

She looks at him, then looks down at her legs and crutches.

JILL
My eyes, Jack; I'm worried about
my eyes.

JACK
We'll take care of things...

JILL
Okay.

Jill walks on crutches to the moves to the disabled toilet and goes
inside.

INT: DISABLED TOILET - DAY

Jill uses her crutches to walk to the seat, then hears scratching.

JILL
Huh ?

She lifts up the toilet seat. A rats jumps out at her.

JILL (screaming)
Aahh !

She hits it with one of her crutches.

JILL
You son-of-a-bitch !

The rat is stunned by a blow from the crutch.

CUT TO:

INT: HOUSE - DAY

Jack, Jill and Bill in the living room of Bill's house. Jill seated with
her crutches by the side of her armchair.

JACK
Can you believe that ?

BILL
A rat ?!

JILL
A rat.

BILL
How did it get there ?

JACK
We don't know. I took care of it.

JILL
I had to decontaminate my crutch
after I'd hit the rat. They live
in sewers. They got all sorts o'
diseases. They dwell in piss and
shit.

BILL
I know. They're disgusting creatures.

JACK

It's where they live. If you live in an environment that's full of urine and doo-doo, you ain't gonna be well disposed to anyone. I guess that's why they're nasty critters.

A beat.

JILL (to Bill)

They closed down the investigation into the accident. Lieutenant said, they got no leads...

BILL

I'm sorry about that.

JILL

I really need ta find out, who done this to me.

BILL

If you do find out, what are you gonna say, to, whoever done it ?

JILL

I'm gonna make him, or her, fully appreciate the damage they done to me, physically, and psychologically.

BILL

You want them, to feel guilty ?

JILL

Proper guilt, real guilt, something they haf-ta carry around for the rest of their lives; to remind them of the damage they done to a fellow human being.

BILL

You reckon they should be penitent ?

JILL

I'd like to put them in the penitentiary, but, they ain't gonna happen.

BILL

What about forgiveness ?

JILL

They put me through Hell. I will be in constant pain, the whole of the rest of my life, dependent on pain-killing medication, each day of my life ! And the psychological harm they done to me ! I don't believe in much forgiveness.

BILL

That's not a very Christian attitude.

JILL

I don't feel very Christian at the moment. That forgiveness is just too convenient for whoever done serious harm to someone else.

BILL

Well, you might have to forgive them in the end, for your own peace of mind.

JILL

They shouldn't be able to forgive themselves, for what they done. Guilt ain't as painful as constant physical pain, or mental distress.

BILL

Guilt is a wasted emotion.

JACK

Is it ? Guilt is a necessary mechanism to prevent us doing really bad things. Without the pain of guilt, people would be capable of, anything. Guilt should prevent the worst of mankind's cruelty. A conscience is essential, if you're gonna be a decent human being.

BILL

Well, I guess you're right. So, we desperately wanna find who done it ?

JACK

We do. You got any ideas ?

BILL

Well, if the cops ain't interested in pursuing the case, I guess we gotta employ our own private investigator.

JILL

That's a really good idea.

BILL

I reckon whoever it is, is more afraid of being sued than feeling guilty. I mean, if they feel real guilty, surely they would've owned up by now ?

JILL

You're right.

BILL

So, we wanna make them pay a price for their misdemeanour...?

JACK

We sure do.

Bill sighs.

CUT TO:

INT: EYE SPECIALIST'S CONSULTING ROOMS - DAY

The specialist has just finished his examination of Jill.

SPECIALIST
You got some degree of visual
impairment...

JILL
From the accident ?

SPECIALIST
From the accident.

JILL
Can it be corrected ?

SPECIALIST
There's probably some nerve damage
as well. I recommend you should see
a neurologist...

JILL
A neurologist ?

SPECIALIST
For brain damage.

JILL (slowly)
Brain damage...

CUT TO:

INT: NEUROLOGIST'S CONSULTING ROOMS - DAY

The neurologist has just finished his examination of Jill.

NEUROLOGIST
You got some mental impairment...

JILL
From the accident ?

NEUROLOGIST
That is my opinion.

CUT TO:

INT: APARTMENT - DAY

Living room. Jack and Jill.

JACK
We find out who ran you down,
we'll sue them for millions !

JILL
You think so ?

JACK
Sure - physical injuries; mental
impairment; damage to your eyes;
should be worth...

JILL (ironically)
A goldmine.

JACK
You deserve compensation for
the injuries you suffered.
Let's go find who done it.

CUT TO:

INT: OFFICE - DAY

The office of RAY, a private investigator. On the door, "Ray Pearson,
Private Investigator".

Ray, Jack and Jill.

JACK
Uh, Mister...

RAY
I'm Ray...

Ray looks at Jack.

JACK
Ray...

Ray looks at Jill.

JILL
Ray...

JACK
What are the chances ?

RAY
Not too good. It's months after
the accident.

JILL
But you're gonna try for us ?

RAY
Sure - you're paying me, but,
I got a reputation for success
in this business, which means,
I won't be ripping you off. If
I don't succeed, which doesn't
happen often, I only charge for
expenses. I get a bonus for results.
You got any suspicions who might've
done this ?

JILL
No...

JACK
We thought it was hit-and-run.

RAY
Well, I'm not so sure about that.

JACK (puzzled)
What do you mean ?

RAY
It might've been, malicious.

JILL
"Malicious - ?"

RAY
It might've been, a deliberate
act, by someone who knows you.

Jill is shocked and puzzled by this.

RAY
You got any idea who that might be ?

JILL
No. I don't think I ever had an
actual enemy.

RAY
An accident like this, it's either
a complete accident, or someone
with intent, using the car as an
instrument -

JACK
- To do what ?

RAY (to Jill)
- Injure you.

JILL
Why would any want to harm me ?

JACK
Jealousy. It could only be, jealousy.

JILL
I don't about to make people jealous.

RAY
Maybe, someone wanted you, out of
action.

JILL
I don't get that...why ?

RAY
You might've been obstructing
someone's plans.

JILL
I've never done that.

RAY
Maybe, someone wanted to punish
you.

Jill looks puzzled.

JILL

Punish me for what ?

RAY

Something you did, or didn't do.
You see, we're either looking for
a complete, or someone with a grudge
against you.

JACK

What's it most likely to be ?

RAY

I'll have to examine the circumstances
more closely. If this was in any way
premeditated, it'd be harder for you
to get compensation out of the driver's
insurance.

JACK

Why is that ?

RAY

The insurance company might claim
you had some fore-knowledge this
might happen.

JILL

That's ridiculous.

RAY

They don't like to pay out. They
will find any excuse to avoid payment.
They might claim collusion, between
you and the driver.

JILL

Crazy !

RAY

They might claim you set the whole
thing up, to get money out-ta them.

JILL

No amount of money can make up for
what I suffered..

RAY

They quantify it in monetary terms.

JACK

Jill would never do anything like
that. She's just too honest. What's
more, she would never hurt herself.

JILL

I have to take pain-killers, on
a daily basis. I would never scheme,
to get anything. I would never be
dishonest.

Ray looks at them both.

RAY
I believe you; but it's what the court believes, what the insurance company suspects.

JACK
That's too cynical.

RAY
Most folks aren't cynical enough.

JACK
What are you saying ?

RAY
I'll make inquiries.

JILL
Thanks.

CUT TO:

EXT: DINER - DAY

Trash-cans.

A rat's head peers out of the top of a trash-can.

INT: DINER KITCHEN - DAY

Through a door left open to take out the trash, a rat sneakily runs in and hides behind a table.

Tracy comes in and slips on the floor.

TRACY
Shit.

She falls and is face to face with the rat.

TRACY
Aahh ! Rats ! Rats !

Later:

Tracy and Jack.

JACK
Where they coming from ?

TRACY
They're sniffing around the trash cans.

JACK
A few, we can deal with; we don't want a plague.

TRACY
A plague ?

JACK
We shouldn't have any rats. I keep

JACK (cont'd)
this place spotlessly clean.

TRACY
This is the most hygienic kitchen
I ever worked in...

JACK
You reckon so ?

TRACY
Sure - nice clean floor, that's why
I tripped, -

JACK
I'm sorry, but I do insist on us
keeping a clean floor, even if it's
a little bit slippery.

A beat.

JACK
These rats, where are they coming
from ?

TRACY
I don't know, Jack.

JACK
I'm gonna get me an exterminator.

CUT TO:

INT: DINER - DAY

Jack lets in the EXTERMINATOR and turns the sign to "Closed" as he shuts
the door and locks it.

The diner is empty.

EXTERMINATOR
I'm gonna gas them critters.

Jack shows the exterminator through to the kitchen.

Later:

The exterminator has just finished gassing in the kitchen. He comes
through to speak to Jack.

EXTERMINATOR
That should do it. Done the trash-
cans, done the kitchen.

JACK
Thanks.

EXTERMINATOR
Now what we gotta do is find out
where they come from.

JACK
Where did they come from ?

EXTERMINATOR
My guess is a sewer round here.

JACK
A sewer ?!

EXTERMINATOR
The sewers round here are disintegrating.

JACK
Why ?

EXTERMINATOR
Poor maintenance.

Jack looks at him.

EXTERMINATOR
The sewers are basically falling apart. There's no money in sewage, no profit, so the water companies don't maintain them properly. Who actually owns which sewer is hard to determine, due to privatisation. Quite frankly, we are in the shit... We got sewers with crack in them large enough to let out rats and human faeces.

JACK
What can we do about it ?

EXTERMINATOR
I can only deal with the rats. I am not allowed to fix the pipes. I can only exterminate rats on your property, because you requested my services. I am not authorised to exterminate any rats on someone else's property, unless they request an extermination. I cannot trespass on anyone else's land, where the sewers are. All I can do is find out where they come from and suggest they do something about it.

JACK
I thought this would be a public health issue.

EXTERMINATOR
But who owns the land ?

JACK
This is, sanitation...

EXTERMINATOR
Not owned by the public - privatised... who owns what particular stretch of sewer, hard to find out.

JACK
We could have a plague o' rats here.

EXTERMINATOR
That is, a distinct possibility.

JACK
Surely the water department - ?

EXTERMINATOR
The water company -

JACK
They must have some responsibility ?

EXTERMINATOR
It's been privatised, which means,
who owns what, who is responsible
for what, who is liable, it's almost
impossible to, unravel.

JACK
The sewage farms...

EXTERMINATOR
Privatised...

JACK
The Inspector Of Public Health -

EXTERMINATOR
Does he even exist any more ? I
doubt it. Whoever is responsible
for this patch of ground, will be
an employee of a private company.
If they will take any action, is
completely at their discretion.

A beat.

EXTERMINATOR
I'm sorry. Let's go find that sewer.

CUT TO:

EXT: BUILDING SITE - DAY

The exterminator and Jack look down into a building site with excavators removing earth to prepare foundations. The exterminator spots a cracked sewer pipe with rats emerging from it.

EXTERMINATOR
Look !

JACK
Jesus ! Must be a colony down there.
Why don't they do something about it ?

EXTERMINATOR
They own the land - what they do with
their problem's up to them..if they
think it is a problem.

JACK
It's like they're just ignoring it,
like they don't care.

EXTERMINATOR

I know...

JACK

Don't they know, rats carry disease ?

Jack shouts at a WORKMAN.

JACK (shouting)

Hey - you !

The workman turns around, with a look saying, you should not disturb me when I'm working.

JACK

Sorry -

The workman looks at Jack.

JACK

That sewer pipe...

WORKMAN

Yeah...?

JACK

Got rats coming out of it...

WORKMAN

I know...

JACK

You got a rat problem.

WORKMAN

It's not my problem...I'm a construction engineer, not a rat catcher.

The workman turns away.

EXTERMINATOR

"Not my problem"...see...It could take months to find out who owns the land, force them to deal with their rat problem.

JACK

I could be out ta business by then, if any of my customers notice rats. I'm going take this to City Hall.

EXTERMINATOR

Good luck.

CUT TO:

INT: CITY HALL OFFICE - DAY

Jack with an OFFICIAL.

OFFICIAL

You gotta follow the correct procedure.

Jack sighs.

JACK
How long is that gonna take ?

OFFICIAL
That depends...

JACK
Depends on what ?

OFFICIAL
Who owns the land, the terms...

JACK
"The terms - ?"

OFFICIAL
- Of the land holding, who is responsible for its maintenance.

JACK
How long will it take ?

OFFICIAL
If they're prepared to co-operate, two, three months...If they wanna block us, it could take a year.

JACK
A whole year - ?

OFFICIAL
- If they obstruct us.

JACK
We're talking about a plague o' rats.

OFFICIAL
You can exterminate any rats you find within the bounds of your own property.

JACK
Thanks a bunch...

OFFICIAL
Property rights haf-ta be respected.

JACK
Nuts !

CUT TO:

INT: HOUSE - DAY

The doorbell rings. Bill goes to the door. He opens it to find Ray standing outside. Ray shows his identity card to Bill

RAY
Hi. I'm a private investigator. I'm looking into your daughter-in-law's accident. May I come in ?

BILL

I guess so.

RAY

Thanks.

Ray comes inside. Bill closes the door.

Later:

In the living room, Ray and Bill seated.

RAY

You have no idea who might wanna injure your daughter-in-law ?

BILL

None.

RAY

Whoever done it, must've left a pretty big dent in their bonnet.

BILL

You reckon so ?

RAY

She had substantial injuries... Someone somewhere knows something.

BILL

Well, I don't know about that.

RAY

Someone helped someone else, to cover it up...some garage - they done a job for him...mended the bonnet...some mechanic, at some garage helped whoever did it, to, hide the damage. That would mean, they would be, complicit in some sort of cover-up. I'm gonna go round the garages and speak to the mechanics...

CUT TO:

INT: GARAGE - DAY

Bob, the mechanic, is working on a car with the bonnet up. Ray approaches him.

RAY

Hi.

BOB

Be with you in a minute.

Ray looks around the garage.

Bob finishes what he was doing and puts down the bonnet of the car.

He turns to look at Ray.

BOB

What can I do for you ?

Ray takes out his identity card.

RAY

I'm a private investigator.

Bob takes out a dirty rag out of a pocket in his overalls and wipes his hands, trying to maintain his composure.

RAY

I'm looking into the circumstances surrounding an accident happened six months ago.

Ray looks at Bob's eyes to see if he is going to give anything away.

RAY

A woman got seriously injured. It was hit and run. The driver just, disappeared, but, there must've been significant damage to the front of the car.

BOB

How d'you know that ?

RAY

From the extent of the injuries. The woman was in hospital for five months. Hip injury, and, neurological damage. Even her eye-sight is damaged.

Bob looks uneasy, shifty. He looks away from Ray's eyes.

RAY

But, unless we can identify who done it, she won't get decent compensation. She deserves to know who injured her.

Bob nervously turns away from Ray, but tried to disguise his uneasy conscience and then turns back to face Ray again.

RAY

Very serious injuries...

Bob breathes in and out.

RAY

I'm looking for someone might've helped the driver, cover it up. The front of the car would have a dent. You done any repairs like that, the past few months ?

BOB

We assume the car was involved in an accident when a customer asks us to do a repair. It is

BOB (cont'd)
quite expensive. We might say something like, "Looks like you been in an accident..." but, it's not our job to press the customer for details. If the car hit a trash-can, you might expect the same degree of damage..

RAY
I understand. You just tell me about the job you done, who you did it for, and when.

BOB
Okay...

CUT TO:

INT: DINER - NIGHT

Jack and Tracy, seated at a table.

Jack looks weary.

JACK
Time all the legal process goes through, I'm gonna be overrun by rats.

TRACY
It's so stupid.

JACK
They put limits on what we are allowed to do.

TRACY
Oh Jack, this was your dream, in ruins ! Lemme tell you, I never had a better boss. I never had a job I enjoyed so much.

JACK
Thanks, Trace; I appreciate your loyalty. I am only allowed to kill any rats found on my property...

EXT: DINER - DAY

Back alley.

The overflowing trash-cans in the heatwave are breeding rats. The rats jump down from the trash-cans and scurry around. Tracy comes out of the kitchen.

TRACY
Rats ! Rats !

Jack runs out of the diner back door with a shotgun and shoots at the rats. He reloads several times and kills a few of them.

JACK
You sons-of-bitches !

INT: DINER - NIGHT

Jack and Tracy, seated at a table, empty coffee cups.

JACK
There's just too many o' them.

TRACY (tired, detached)
I'm sorry, Jack.

Tracy stares down at her empty cup.

JACK
Word's getting around, we got a rat
problem - people are staying away..

TRACY
Can't blame 'em.

JACK
I guess not.

Jack sighs.

JACK
I'm gonna get me a pump-action
shotgun...blow them to Hell..

EXT: DINER - DAY

Around the trash-cans. Jack is furiously using his pump-action shotgun at the rats.

INT: DINER - NIGHT

Jack and Tracy, seated at a table, coffee cups half full. JACK Just too many.

TRACY
I served two customers the whole day.

JACK
Gotta tackle them rats at source.

Tracy looks puzzled.

TRACY
What do you mean ?

JACK
I'm going down the sewer -

TRACY
Jack, you can't do that..

JACK
Yes, I can, and I will.

Tracy looks worried and doubtful.

TRACY
Sewers are full of piss and shit...

JACK
...And rats. I prefer to say, "Pee"
and "Poo"...

TRACY
They got disease...

JACK
It's a bad environment. No wonder
rats turn out nasty.

TRACY
You can't take the law into your
own hands...

JACK
That's what I haf-ta do...Them rats
are a public menace...I'm doing a
civic duty...

TRACY
You would be breaking the law.

JACK
I don't care. I am usually a law-
abiding citizen, but this is just
ridiculous. I gotta do this.

TRACY
Oh Jack, please don't go down the
sewers !

JACK
I gotta exterminate every last one
of them.

CUT TO:

INT: HOUSE - DAY

The doorbell rings. Bill opens the door, leaning on his walking stick to find Ray there. Ray has a knowing smile on his face. Bill stands there, irritated by Ray's confident smirk.

Ray leans against the door-frame.

RAY
Hi.

BILL (flatly)
Oh, hello.

RAY
Just need to ask you a few more
questions.

BILL
Didn't you ask me all them questions
before ?

RAY
I got some new information.

BILL
What information ?

RAY
New evidence. You gonna let me in ?

BILL
Okay...

Bill grudgingly takes his shoulder off the door-frame and lets Ray into the hallway, and then into the living room.

RAY
Spoke to this mechanic, name of
Bob...

Ray looks at Bill's reaction to the name of Bob. Bill shows an involuntary minor flinch.

RAY
You know him ?

BILL
Er...no.

RAY
May I sit down ?

Bill shrugs.

BILL
Sit down.

Ray sits.

Bill walks to his armchair and sits, using his stick to support him as he lowers himself into the chair.

RAY
Bob told me about a repair he
did, to the front of a car, got
damaged in an accident. A woman
got injured, seriously, in this
accident. Unless we identify the
driver, she ain't gonna get much
in the way of compensation. Hit
and run means, no-one specific is
to blame.

Bill tries not to give anything away, by seeming detached, not looking directly at Ray.

Ray leans forwards to look directly at Bill.

RAY
This is about real people; they
all got names. The woman's name
was Jill, your daughter-in-law.
She has permanent disability

RAY (cont'd)
 resulting from that accident. But, I'm in a quandary here. You see, if I were to discover, the driver was related to the injured party, it's possible the insurance company says, it's a put-up job, the driver and the woman connived to stage this accident, but the driver screwed up, he hit her too hard, with too much speed, and caused her severe injuries; but, if it was connived, they can say, they got no liability whatsoever, seeing how this was all staged, even if it went wrong. So, she would get zilch, even less than gets with hit and run. You see what I mean. It might be against natural justice, but maybe it's in her best interests not to disclose the name of the driver...which brings us to the little matter of the repair Bob did for you...

(points his finger at Bill)

...You did it...You ran down your own daughter-in-law. Why ?

BILL

You met my son, Jack - ?

RAY

I met him. He's paying my expenses.

BILL

He's paying for my daughter-in-law's medical bills as well, out-ta the money he made from running a diner, the money she wouldn't let him use to run a business. She would've used it to buy a lousy Japanese Toyota coupe, instead. I couldn't let her do that..

RAY

So, you took her out of the equation..

BILL

You could put it like that.

RAY

She has life-changing injuries, and minimal compensation in the pipeline.

BILL

Well, I'm sorry about that. I did not intend to injure her so bad.

RAY

A little more speed, you would've killed her. Now, that is what I call,

RAY (cont'd)
reckless endangerment. You were reckless.

BILL
Maybe, I was. I kept my eye on the speedometer. I hit her at twenty-seven miles per hour...

RAY
You wanted her out of the way, in a hospital for long enough for him to buy that diner.

BILL
She had to be, incapacitated. She don't need that Toyota coupe.

A short silence when they look at each other.

BILL
So, what are you gonna do ?

RAY
I can't tell them it was you, for the reasons I outlined, but, why should you get away with it ?

BILL
Because...I don't know. I can't justify, me getting away with it.

RAY
It would be morally wrong, don't you think, to let you get away with it ?

BILL
I guess you're right.

Ray sits back in his chair.

RAY
To punish you, and for no other reason, you will haf-ta pay me to keep this a secret.

BILL
That's blackmail.

RAY
It's what you deserve for damaging your daughter-in-law.

BILL
You're a rat.

RAY
No, I'm the rat-catcher; you're the rat.

Bill sighs.

BILL

Blackmail is immoral..

RAY

Blackmailing an immoral person,
is not immoral.

BILL

Yes, it is.

RAY

No, it is not.

BILL

What would you know ? Taking the
moral high ground with me, when
you're a dirty stinking immoral
blackmailing hypocrite yourself.
You're as bad as me, in your own
way.

RAY

I'm nowhere near as a bad as you.
You deliberately injured a fellow
human being, for nothing.

BILL

I did it to free up the money, so's
my son could buy that diner, which
is paying her medical bills.

RAY

She wouldn't need no medical bills
paying if you didn't injure her in
the first place !

BILL

Don't pretend you're better than me.

RAY

The money you pay me to keep this
quiet, I'm gonna save up in a fund.
When you die, I'm gonna keep your
secret; I'm not gonna tell her
anything. She will receive, from
an anonymous benefactor, all the
money you paid me.

BILL

I don't believe you; you're gonna
keep that money to yourself. You
just saying that to justify your
blackmailing me, making out you're
some kinda moral person - which
you are not ! When I die, I bet
she won't get a dime. You'll keep
that money for yourself, you vile
son-of-a-bitch ! When I'm gone,
there's no reason for you to give
her that money. She'll start asking
questions - how come some anonymous
benefactor is paying her, out of the

BILL (cont'd)
blue, for no reason whatsoever !
She'll have her suspicions.

RAY
But you'll be dead, so she won't
know you it was you.

BILL
Shit !

Bill cannot argue with this.

BILL
Okay; I'll pay you.

RAY
Thanks. I am more moral than you.

BILL
That don't mean much.

RAY
It means something.

Bill growls.

BILL
Okay; I gotta pay -

RAY
- The price for being a disgusting,
malicious, immoral, degenerate pile
of shit.

CUT TO:

EXT: STREET - NIGHT

Near a manhole cover a few feet away from the wall surrounding the building site.

Jack, dressed like a commando, with sub-machine gun, pistol, extra rounds in a gun-belt and an army knife, lifts up the manhole cover whilst Tracy holds a torch. Jack slides the cover off and to the side.

JACK
Gimme the torch, please, Tracy.

She hands him the torch. He shines it down into the sewer.

Jack shudders as the smell reaches his nostrils.

JACK
Pooh ! It stinks -

TRACY
- Of shit ?

JACK
Yes, it stinks of doo-doo.

Jack sighs and shakes his head.

TRACY

And piss ?

JACK

- And urine. Smells like a toilet ain't been cleaned for a long time.

TRACY

Oh Jack, you can't go down there, not if it stinks so bad.

JACK

I gotta do this, for myself, and for America...

TRACY

"For America - ?"

JACK

A man's gotta have a right to kill a few dozen rats if they endanger his livelihood. Don't matter whose land it's on.

TRACY (despairingly)

Jack...

JACK

Hey, I gonna return a hero.

TRACY

Good luck, Jack.

JACK

You just keep a look-out - call me if the cops come.

TRACY

Okay.

JACK

Going down.

Jack lowers himself into the drain. Tracy sees his head disappear as he climbs down into the sewer.

INT: SEWER DRAIN - NIGHT

Jack climbs down the ladder into the foul water.

JACK

Pooh !

He is up to his knees in water as he wades through towards an opening into a main sewer, shining the torch in front of him.

INT: MAIN SEWER - NIGHT

Jack is now in the main sewer channel, a large circular tube with cracks in its sides and loose brickwork caused by the vibrations from the building work. Jack shines the torch ahead of him. He thinks he sees something.

He whips out his sub-machine gun and fires wildly ahead of him. He stops firing and shines the light. He sees that he has succeeded in splattering a piece of human faeces all up the side of the sewer wall.

JACK
Ah rats ! Doo-doo !

Jack continues warily on his way.

JACK
Come out, come out, wherever you are..

He shines the torch ahead of him.

JACK
Got something for you fellas.

The water is getting deeper. He is now in almost up to his waist.

JACK
Oh God-damn...I gotta go pee.

Jack holds his sub-machine gun up high with one hand as he undoes his fly with the other. He urinates into the sewer water. When he finishes, he zips himself up.

JACK
Should wash my hands - God-damn,
ain't hygienic. No good to wash
your hands in pee and poo.

He wades through, then hears a squeaking noise.

JACK
I think I found you.

He shines the torch with one hand and aims the sub-machine gun with the other.

JACK
Come to daddy.

Suddenly, five rats are biting his legs.

Jack yells in agony.

JACK
Aaaahhhh !

Jack shakes his legs and uses the butt of his sub-machine gun to get them off him, then fires at the rats.

JACK
Eat shit ! Mother-fucker !

The bullets rip through the rats, which are blasted apart as they hit the walls with the force of the impacts.

JACK
Any more of you sons-of-bitches ?

Jack turns and fires into the sewer water.

Several rats fly up in a spray of blood as they hit the walls.

JACK
Where you breeding, you fucking
scumbags ?

Jack shines the torch into the water and sees a colony ahead of him. There must be a hundred rats there.

JACK
Mother-fucking rats !

He sprays bullets into them. The rats fly through the air amid sprays of blood.

JACK
C'mon, show yourselves !

He closes in on the colony, firing into them. He is suddenly out of bullets. He takes out a new cartridge, rams it in, but in the time, ten rats have leapt on him.

JACK
You - !

Before he can say anything more, the rats are all over him, his legs, arms, chest and neck. One bites into his neck, drawing blood. He takes out his army knife and slashes its throat. It falls down dead. He slashes at the other rats, killing several of them. His sub-machine gun falls into the water.

JACK
Shit !

He jumps into the sewer water, wrestling with rats on his body and trying to stab at them, reaching out his hand to his sub-machine gun, but it is being swept along with the sewer water current, the end of the barrel just above water.

Jack's hand grasps the gun. It suddenly goes off, wildly in the water. Jack lets go.

The rats continue to bite him. He stabs them and gets all but two of them off his body. He stands upright and takes out his pistol as a rat climbs up his chest onto his neck and bites. Jack shoves the pistol straight down the rat's throat.

JACK
Say your prayers.

Jack blows its head off. Rat brains splatter across his face.

JACK
You..dirty rat.

Jack puts his hand back into the sewer water to stop the sub-machine gun before it reaches a drain. His hand extends to it. He clutches it, but then he suddenly falls down the open drain.

The barrel of the sub-machine gun is the only thing stopping him from being drowned as he holds onto it. The machine-gun butt is lodged in a hole in the drain wall. Jack tries to get footing, but there is none.

He puts one hand onto the main sewer and begins to haul himself up, but the rats sense him and start congregating there to have a feast. They bite into him.

He is restricted as he can only use one hand for protection. He blows several of them away with his pistol and stabs some of them. He manages to climb out of the drain, with rats hanging onto his body and legs by their teeth.

JACK
Get off of me !

He stabs at them and fires his pistol at them, then drowns some of the rats attached to his lower body. He sees the colony ahead of him, picks up the sub-machine gun by the barrel end, dislodged it and blasts and blasts.

More than fifty rats are blown into the air, fly across in a spray of blood and flesh and hit the walls of the sewers.

Jack stabs at the few remaining rats on his body. He picks up a rat and turns its face to see the massacred colony, with piles of rat guts.

JACK
Stupid cunt ! You think you can
mess with me ?

He cuts the rat's head off and throws its body onto the pile.

JACK
All of you mother-fucking rats,
you're no match for me !

He fires into the pile of rat bodies and re-splatters them against the walls.

JACK
Die, die, die, die, die !

Later:

Jack has satisfied himself that he has killed the rats and is slowly wading up the main sewer channel towards the sewer drain.

Jack shines the torch ahead of him down at the water, then sees the reflections of the end of the torch's light beam hitting the water multiply, until there are several images coalescing.

Jack's eyesight becomes blurred, and where the walls end and where the water begins is indistinct.

Jack is confused. He shakes his head. He runs his hand over his forehead and takes it down again to look at it in the light (the torch in his left hand). His hand is dirty and has some blood on it.

Jack walks a little further to a place where there seems to be only a few inches of dirty water below the concave walls of the sewer.

Jack staggers towards this section of the sewer and flops down to rest, his back against the wall, curved with the concave shape of the wall, his feet and lower legs in the dirty water, his arm outstretched, shining the torch ahead of him.

He is exhausted. His eyes close. The torch drops out of his opened hand into the water, and sinks, hitting the bottom, but remains on, shining a beam through the water upwards, as it is waterproof.

Later:

Jack's eyes open. The torch is in his hand, resting on the level of the water, his elbow bent and touching the bottom of the concave sewer.

Jack gets to his feet and makes his way along the sewer, shining the torch ahead of him, as he wades through the water.

Jack smiles as he sees the ladder in front of him.

He gets to the lower end of the ladder. He climbs up wearily and emerges through the manhole, but there is too much light at the top, and several light sources shining down at him, so much so that he has to shield his eyes as he climbs out, with his sub-machine gun on a strap over his shoulder and across his back.

EXT: STREET - NIGHT

Jack emerges, hand over eyes, into a blaze of light from half a dozen cops all shining their torches straight at him. The cops have cordoned off the street, and have Tracy standing on the side-walk, guarded by officers.

TRACY

I'm sorry, Jack.

A LIEUTENANT speaks.

LIEUTENANT

You're coming with us.

Jack climbs out of the drain and stands upright. OFFICERS surround him.

OFFICER

Drop that gun.

JACK

Okay.

Jack lowers his sub-machine gun to the ground, followed by his pistol, then his knife.

Jack holds his hands above his head as the officers' pistols point at him in a circle.

CUT TO:

INT: OFFICE - NIGHT

Police station office.

Jack seated, a towel around his body, his hair wet, with a cup of coffee in his hand, near the lieutenant's desk. The lieutenant and an officer standing.

LIEUTENANT

We had to give you a shower. You were stinking of, shit, basically, and piss.

Jack nods.

LIEUTENANT
What you doing down the drain ?

JACK
I was in the sewer...

LIEUTENANT
What you doing down the sewer ?

JACK
Killing rats.

OFFICER
Who gave you permission to kill
rats down a sewer ? Where's your
license ?

JACK
I am not a licensed exterminator.

LIEUTENANT
In which case, you should not be
down the sewer, killing rats. We
got public exterminators to do that.

JACK
The rats came from a crack in a pipe
on private land - I had ta take them
out at source.

LIEUTENANT
Why ?

JACK
They were ruining my business - I got
a diner next to the sewer.

LIEUTENANT
We'll see what the judge has to say
about this.

CUT TO:

INT: COURTROOM - DAY

Court in session.

The judge passing sentence on Jack.

JUDGE
You simply cannot take the law into
your own hands.

JACK
I'm sorry, your Honour.

JUDGE
I'm sentencing you to six months'
probation and a hundred hours of
community service.

JACK
Thank you, your Honour.

JUDGE
Since you like shooting rats so much,
you can help the public exterminator,
killing rats...

CUT TO:

INT: APARTMENT - DAY

Living room.

Jack and Jill. Jill seated, crutches by the side of the chair. Jack has just come in.

JILL
Enjoy yourself ?

JACK
I sure did - blew the doo-doo out-ta
some rats.

JILL
Told you.

JACK
I mighty grateful to that judge, let
me help out, The Exterminator.

The doorbell rings.

JACK
I'll go.

Jack goes through to the hallway, up to the door. Jack opens up to find Ray standing outside.

RAY
Hi.

JACK
Oh, hi.

RAY
May I come in ?

JACK
Sure.

RAY
Thanks.

Ray comes in. Jack closes the door. They go through to the living-room.

Jack and Ray stand.

RAY (to Jill)
Hi.

JILL
Oh, hi.

RAY

How are you ?

JILL

Oh, I'm getting better...

RAY

Good. Glad to hear that.

JACK

You got any news for us, Ray ?

RAY

Well, may I sit down ?

JILL

Sure.

Ray sits.

RAY

I'm afraid, I couldn't get anywhere. The trail dried up. I went round the garages and the mechanics just said, they often do repairs...for instance, when the front of a car hits a trash-can...they don't ask the driver what caused the damage. Unfortunately, no driver is actually gonna volunteer he hit a pedestrian...so, whoever's done it, unless it hurts his conscience.. enough for him to confess, he's gonna get away with it.

JILL

"Him ?" You think it's a man - ?

RAY

Could've been a woman.

JACK

You said "man."

RAY

I did, didn't I ? I think that was a figure of speech...easier to say than, "him or her." I'm sorry, but all you can get for now is minimum compensation for hit and run. Now, because I did not succeed, all I'm gonna charge you is, expenses. I'll send you my bill, in a few days.

Ray gets up to go.

JILL

Thanks for trying, Ray.

Ray lets out a slight sigh.

JACK

I'll show you out.

RAY

Thanks.

Jack shows Ray out of the living-room into the hall. Jack goes to the door and opens it. Ray goes out and stands momentarily just outside the door.

RAY

Sorry, Jack, I couldn't help.

JACK

Don't worry about it..

RAY

Thanks. 'Bye, Jack.

JACK

'Bye.

Jack closes the door. He goes back through the hallway to the living-room. He stands near Jill.

JACK

Sorry.

JILL

I understand.

Jill sighs.

Later:

Jill watching TV. Jack comes in from the kitchen, stands for a moment, then speaks.

JACK

I was thinking...

JILL

Yeah...?

JACK

How about - we have a meal, at the diner ? Invite Bill...

JILL

Okay.

CUT TO:

INT: DINER - DAY

Jack, Jill and Bill at a table, with food and drink.

JACK

So the judge said...

JILL

Here he goes...

JACK

I'm sure he wants to hear, honey. You wanna hear, don't you, Bill ?

BILL

Sure...

JACK

So, the judge says, it was a disgrace and a crying shame, a decent citizen like me...the proprietor of a business...

JILL

Your precious diner...

Bill looks at Jill with disdain and disapproval for mocking Jack.

JACK

...My diner...

JILL

...Our diner...

JACK

...Our diner...the owner of a diner, just trying to make a living, a nice place to eat, good food, pleasant staff, good hygiene standards...

Tracy has been over-hearing, and joins in.

TRACY

...The cleanest kitchen I ever worked in; I can vouch for that...

JACK

Nice surroundings...it was a crying shame, judge says...I got driven to such extreme measures...crying shame, fella like me felt forced take the law into my own hands...

BILL

It's a good judge...

JILL

For sure...

JACK

Said...it was a disgrace...told them to clear it up, by order of the court, exterminate all the rats on their land, in their section of sewer, every last one...

BILL

So, you got no more rats ?

JACK

The rat problem has been solved. I got to do some of the exterminating myself, by order of the court, one hundred hours of community service, assisting the public exterminator, killing rats. I enjoyed that.

BILL
Rats are a menace.

JACK
They were a menace.

JILL
Well, Jack, you got your diner.

Jack smiles.

CUT TO:

DREAM SEQUENCE. INT: SEWER - NIGHT

Jack's eyes open, to find reclined, his head against the curved wall of a sewer.

He gropes for the torch, his hand under the water level. His hand comes up, holding the torch above water level. His back curved on the wall, Jack's turns the torch from right to left, surveying this area of the sewer.

He repeats the motion of the torch from right to left several times. Then, in one slow sweeping motion of the torch, Jack glimpses something for a second. The torch swings backwards and forwards again. And again. And again. Each time there's something there. A figure perhaps. Or two.

Jack sits up, drawing himself out of his slumped position with most of his legs in the water, so that only his feet are now below the water level. He seems to come to, his eyes widening, his jaw becoming less slack, and more animation coming into his face.

He now has the presence of mind and concentration to stop these metronomic sweeps of the torch and decide to hold it when it next crosses the object (person or persons) it lights on. Sweeping back from right to left, he stops the torch.

Two figures are discernible, Bill and Jill.

Bill has his walking stick stationed against the concave wall of the sewer and is holding Jill's head below the level of the sewer water, as she struggles to breathe, with bubbles rising from her face, her head shaking under water.

Jack wades through the sewer water towards Bill.

Bill sees Jack, but keeps holding Jill's head down under the sewer water.

JACK
What are you doing ?

BILL
I'm drowning that bitch of a wife
of yours.

JACK
Why ?

BILL
So you can get the money to buy
that diner.

CUT TO:

INT: BEDROOM - NIGHT

Jack suddenly wakes out of his dream and sits up in bed. He is shaken and distraught, even shivering a little.

This wakes Jill up.

JILL
What's up, Jack ?

JACK
I had this terrible dream.

She puts her arms around him.

JILL
It's over now.

CUT TO:

INT: KITCHEN - DAY

Jack and Jill's place.

Jack, Jill and Bill, seated around the kitchen table.

JILL
I resent the damage done to me, I
resent it.

A beat.

JILL
Someone did me a very serious injury.
I wanna find out who that someone was.

BILL
Does it matter ?

JILL
Of course it matters. I need someone
to hate.

BILL
You can't hate them forever.

JILL
I will hate them for as long as I
consider necessary.

BILL
You gotta learn to forgive and
forget.

JILL
Why should I ?

JACK
For your own peace of mind.

Jill sighs.

BILL
You gotta put this accident behind
you...

JILL
I can't.

A beat.

BILL
Maybe, something bad has to happen,
before something good.

JILL
Er ?

BILL
You suffered, but -

JILL
But what ?

BILL
Jack's got his diner.

JILL
What has my accident got to do
with his diner ? Our diner ?

BILL
I...I don't know.

A beat.

JILL
You see, I got no redress, so I
ask myself, what did I do wrong ?

JACK
You did nothing wrong.

JILL
Somehow, life is punishing me for
something I either did, or didn't
do..something.

JACK
What ?

JILL
I don't know. Maybe, I didn't treat
you too well.

JACK
You treated me good. I have no
complaints.

JILL
Maybe, if...

Jill sighs.

BILL
You shouldn't think like that.

JILL
But I do, I do. I'm never gonna
be the person I should've been...

Jill starts to cry a little.

Bill gets up.

Jack tries to comfort Jill by taking her hand and holding it.

Bill goes to the kitchen back door.

BILL
I'm sorry...

Bill goes out.

JACK
He doesn't like to see people
cry. He can't cope with it. He
lacks empathy.

JILL
Good job you got some.

JACK
Thanks.

A beat.

JILL
Sometimes, I just despair. It
just seems like the world will
not take responsibility for my
accident, like no-one's to blame,
except me.

JACK
You're not to blame. As for the
world, it was hit-and-run; we
could not identify the driver.

JILL
You know, I am a damaged person.
I got limitations on what I can
do. What is my purpose in life,
if there's so many things just
beyond me now ?

JACK
You're still my wife...

JILL
The limit of my function is...

Jill sighs.

JACK
We got a diner, a thriving business.

JILL

I guess so.

JACK

We got each other.

JILL

Thanks, Jack. I guess, I'm just gonna haf-ta learn to live with it...

JACK

You'll get over it, one day.

JILL

I hope so.

THE END