

THE RAIL

by
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*In 1990 Nashville TN, LGBTQ dancers changed their out-dated
Southern Society using a chrome pole. This is the true story.*

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FADE IN:

CAPTION: *The Rail is a strippers stage edge where audience members sit to be close to the action and also "slap" tips.*

INT. ACE OF SPADES, NASHVILLE, TN - NEW YEAR'S EVE

Carpeted night club of round tables with cushioned chairs in total darkness. One by one, stage lights flare on revealing a rectangular runway-stage perpendicular to its wall. Overhead spotlights snap on illuminating a chrome dance pole mounted near stage's *The Rail*. Dance-rock music *blares* on.

N.Y.E. CROWD, straight and gay MEN in tuxedos with some hard-partying FEMALES in evening dresses, sit at their own tables sprinkled throughout. All wear "*Happy New Year 1990*" hats.

CAPTION: *This is the true story of how dancing changed a city*

KRAKEN, mid-20s, African-American, toned but not muscular, has long black dreadlocks down to his waist. He moon-walks up the stage wearing a white leather raincoat. On music's crescendo, he spins going arms-wide as blue and red LED lights come on sewed around his coat's edges. Crowd *explodes*.

COOL-AID, Black-Haitian, 30s, in a rasta cap with bright red glasses and rainbow-suspenders, wears no shirt. He is in a raised booth on the side playing records. His smooth-sounding D.J.-voice ramps up the NYE Crowd's energy exponential.

COOL-AID (FILTERED)

I am your D.J., Cool-Aid! No
artificial sweeteners here, ladies!
Welcome to the now infamous --Ace
of Spades New Year's Eve Show!

Kraken drops his coat off one shoulder dancing to the music then does same with other shoulder until his oiled back is exposed. On next crescendo, he drops the jacket to kick it off-stage. His tiny black thong makes him look nude as he gyrates his glistening hips to the music's beat with hands behind his head. He is, a black Adonis. NYE Crowd goes *feral*.

Crystal chandeliers come on as strobe lights *flash* across the stage and "*Happy New Year 1990*" balloons drop from ceiling.

POLE DANCE SEQUENCE: Kraken is the club's best dancer.

Kraken ends by doing a double backflip off the top of the pole as music finishes. NYE Crowd gives a *standing ovation*. New music *plays* as Kraken networks his way through patrons with dollar bills being stuck in his thong. Kraken gets to club's entrance and turns around smiling throwing kisses.

Kraken grabs a brown paper lunch bag with something in it hidden by the front door and exits most theatrical.

EXT. ACE OF SPADES CLUB - CONTINUOUS

The Club's exterior has a brick front with anti-Gay graffiti sprayed on it. A "Happy New Year 1990" banner hangs high.

Kraken exits still in his thong carrying the paper bag. He crosses street by holding hands up to stop traffic in both directions with a Brooklyn-attitude "Hey, I'm walkin' here!" His shiny black cheeks enter a swanky hotel's main entrance.

INT. HOTEL ACROSS FROM ACE OF SPADES - CONTINUOUS

Large expensive lobby with red carpet and matching furniture.

Kraken enters strolling past HOTEL GUESTS, mostly couples in formal-dress, who shirk abhorred at this "naked" black man.

Kraken steps up to the check-in counter. HOTEL MANAGER in hotel's tie and blazer is shocked but recovers nonplussed.

HOTEL MANAGER

May I help you --sir?

Kraken holds up a finger "Wait" then pulls a small glass capsule out of his bag and taps its white powder on counter. He bends holding one finger against a nostril, snorts it all, then pulls a revolver out of his bag and aims it at Manager.

KRAKEN

All your cash, man. Stay cool, I
always am.

Hotel Manager is taken aback then kneels with the paper bag to open a safe. He re-stands with bag so over-stuffed bills fall out. Kraken takes his bag and struts to the exit then stops to rotate his butt in a circle with hip-bump finish.

EXT. HOTEL ACROSS FROM ACE OF SPADES - CONTINUOUS

The outside world is oblivious. Kraken exits to stuff the gun in his thong's "pouch" then turns to see TWO PATROL OFFICERS, uniformed, eating donuts, staring at him with open mouths.

Kraken smiles most charming then takes off running in the opposite direction. Two Officers drop their donuts to yell with their mouths full so crumbs spray everywhere.

PATROL OFFICERS

ST-STOP!

A stream of money is flowing behind Kraken as he runs. He reaches into his thong's pouch to readjust as Two Officers *fire*. Their bullets hit Kraken in a butt-cheek slowing him to a limp then in the other butt-cheek dropping him. Kraken falls forward and his paper bag *explodes* onto the sidewalk so bills fly everywhere. Two Police Officers rush to cuff him.

KRAKEN

In my money-maker, man?! Damn!

PEDESTRIANS look straight up innocent as they step on large denomination bills then pocket same and walk away *whistling*.

EXT. ACES OF SPADES CLUB - MOMENTS LATER

NYE Crowd exits onto sidewalk to watch the excitement. When they realize it's Kraken, they begin *clapping* and laughing.

Club's outside speaker comes on as Cool-Aid's voice calls out their midnight countdown from inside.

KOOL-AID (FILTERED)

...3, 2, 1, HAPPY NEW YEAR!

NYE Crowd pulls out plastic party-kazoos and begin *blowing*. Multi-color party-graffiti is thrown by All. The speaker now *plays* a driving beat. It's party-time, Kentucky-Fried style.

M.N.P.D. Police Cruisers arrive with red lights and *sirens*.

FLASHBACK TO:

EXT. AUTO GARAGE - DAY

A two-bay gas station with glass-dome logo pumps. It typical gas-station two bays has one car raised on a lift. A lone MNPd police cruiser with red light and *siren* on speeds past.

CAPTION: *One year earlier*

A new white Lincoln drives over a pressure hose and its bell *dings* twice. Car parks at a pump. The driver's door opens and white patent leather shoes step out first, then their owner.

LANCELOT DUPREÉ, impeccably dressed and impeccably dirty-minded, is a cultured older gay man with a charismatic personality. He has short white hair and piercing blue eyes. He is wearing white pants and a baby-blue blazer with matching ascot. He is foppishly stylish ahead of his time.

GAS ATTENDANT, 18, in dirty mechanic's jumpsuit, runs up.

LANCELOT

Fill her this much, *gently please*.

Lancelot pats his car's trunk lovingly laying a \$20 bill in Gas Attendant's hand as his fingers pull across its palm.

Sound of a dropped wrench *clanging* inside on the bay's cement floor draws his attention. He focuses in on the tight ass of a young mechanic inside, smiles, and sashays towards him.

INT. SAME AUTO GARAGE - MOMENTS LATER

JOSHUA "THE MECHANIC" THIBODEAUX, 20s, is Cajun with its same accent. His short brown hair is highlighted in blonde. No one is allowed to touch his hair, not even his Ex. He stands in a filthy mechanic's jumpsuit holding his hurt hand cursing.

JOSHUA

Putain, Merde, Connard!

Joshua bends to pick up his wrench with his backside to Lancelot who enters and begins fanning himself flushed.

LANCELOT

Yoo-hooooo, oh boy-oy!

Joshua stands too fast *hitting* his head on the car's muffler.

JOSHUA

Bordel de merde!

Lancelot fans himself faster getting out a business card.

Joshua spins from under the car holding a hand on his head.

JOSHUA

Quoi?!

LANCELOT

Would you by any small chance, be
looking to earn extra "big" money?

Joshua sizes up Lancelot and doesn't like what he sees.

JOSHUA

Va te faire foutre.

Lancelot has an unusual and unique *laugh* as he pulls out his matching pocket handkerchief to politely cover his open mouth as he hands Joshua his business card with a bent wrist.

LANCELOT

Exactly, dear boy. But if you
change your mind, drop by tomorrow
morning around nine-ish. You might,
just might, be so glad you did.

Lancelot waves tootle-loo as he sashays back to his car.

Joshua looks at the card then at Lancelot.

JOSHUA

Who da hell be you, zwah?

Lancelot waves his handkerchief back-and forth above his head
without looking back.

LANCELOT

I might, just might, be your
captain someday, cabin-boy!

Lancelot walks by Gas Attendant who is holding pump-handle in
one hand with his other hand out for a tip.

Lancelot gets in his car and drives away *blowing* his melodic
horn which also has a "unique" sound.

Gas Attendant's smile fades as he hangs up his pump-handle.

ATTENDANT

Flame on, lightening-bug.

EXT. A HOUSE ON CITY OUTSKIRTS - LATER THAT DAY

A small Rambler in need of repair has a chainlink fence.
Inside its fence is a girl's pink bicycle on its side.

Joshua parks his motorcycle at the curb then enters fence. He
picks up the bike carrying it to front door and *knocks*.

KENDRA "KENNY" THIBODEAUX, 10, in a summer dress, answers.

KENNY

Daddy!

Kenny jumps and Joshua catches her in his free arm. She hugs
him. He presents her the bike saying *tahn-pet* for "storm."

JOSHUA

Look like tempête.

Joshua puts Kenny's bike just inside the open door.

A very pissed-off REBECCA "BECKY" THIBODEAUX, 20s, once a Prom Queen now a frazzled hard-working single-mom, yanks the door all the way open with a hand out.

JOSHUA
Plus de temps.

BECKY
Why? Bill collectors don't give me
"more time?!"

JOSHUA
Je suis en train.

BECKY
Try harder!

Kenny hugs Joshua's neck. He smiles nervous sticking his free hand in a pocket, gets a confused look, then pulls Lancelot's card out. He glances at it then shoves it back in.

JOSHUA
I, I gettin' second l'emploi!

BECKY
Doing what?!

JOSHUA
Uhhhhh --? *Un garçon?*

BECKY
You --? Working at a restaurant?

JOSHUA
Bistro. Supposed to have bon tips.

Becky's features soften. She "asks" with outstretched arms for Kenny. Joshua hands her over. Kenny hugs Becky's neck.

BECKY
One week. But then "we" have to
have it. Got it?

Becky steps back inside and closes the door.

Joshua traces a finger around its window frame whispering.

JOSHUA
"Got it." --*Je t'aime les deux.*

Joshua gets on his motorcycle and rides away.

Thunder *rumbles* in the distant grey sky.

EXT. ACE OF SPADES CLUB - NEXT MORNING

Building's brick exterior is washed bright with no graffiti on it. Its brand-new neon sign comes on multi-colored.

Joshua, wearing a bright yellow t-shirt, parks his motorcycle against the building then enters club.

INT. ACE OF SPADES - CONTINUOUS

Interior is new and shiny. Bar in the far corner is closed.

Joshua enters and waits for his eyes to adjust then hears the ultra-positive voice of ACE, 30s, short, stocky, muscular, with brown eyes and brown hair gelled into a *fohawk*. Joshua can now see Ace speaking to THREE OTHER YOUNG MEN.

ACE

Gentleman, this is not just about dancing, acrobatics, or gymnastics. This is all about --Entertainment.

Joshua arrives to their group. Ace gives him the once-over.

ACE

Let's meet n' greet each other to find out who your competition is.
(points to Joshua)
You first, Tweety Bird.

JOSHUA

Moi? Oh, I actually, uh, I actually don't know. Why am I ici?

Lancelot speaks from a dark recessed corner.

LANCELOT

Eternal question of the ages, dear boy! But that doesn't mean we can't have a little fun while waiting for someone to answer, now does it?

JOSHUA

Joshua Thibodeaux, mechanic.

ACE

We all use stage names here. Mine is ACE. And since your hair is just so darn pretty with a touch of axel grease, how about, "THE MECHANIC."

Ace looks to the next wanna-be dancer standing beside Joshua.

ACE

And you, Idaho?

COUNTRY, a farm boy if there ever was one, 20s, Caucasian, short hair, wearing jeans and a cowboy hat, chews on a piece of straw. He looks around to see who Ace is talking to.

ACE

Not the freshest egg in the carton?

(no response)

Yo, wicker-man!

Country points to his own chest.

Ace nods then glances at Lancelot shaking his head.

COUNTRY

(thick Southern accent)

On my own since a teen. I always need cash. You can call me anything long as it's not late fer supper!

ACE

You're a little bit more than just country so we'll just call you, "COUNTRY." Surf's up, beach boy.

SLEDGE, 30s, long sun-bleached hair, does look like a surfer because of his deep tan. He is fit and wearing a bandana around his neck with his short sleeves rolled up shorter.

SLEDGE

Construction worker. I live in a trailer with my five kids.

JOSHUA

What your cher-cher tink a' you workin' ici?

SLEDGE

Wouldn't know, wouldn't care.

COUNTRY

You wife left you with five kids?

SLEDGE

All four of them did.

ACE

"Four?!" We all have our reasons for being here but since Life seems to have hammered you pretty good, everybody meet --"SLEDGE."

Ace tilts his head checking out DETROIT, late-20s, African-American, tall, thin, goofy-looking, who died the top of his Afro red and is wearing new hip-cool red leather clothes.

ACE

I have, seen you around town?

Detroit lowers his sunglasses to look overtop them.

DETROIT

That's 'cause I knows everybody in town, man.

ACE

Dressed like you are, doesn't look like you need money?

DETROIT

Already got one mother, dude.

ACE

(snaps fingers)

You go by 'Dee-T' right? But here, you'll motor on as, "DETROIT."

(claps hands)

Okay! You've got two hours before the second wave washes in so ...

COUNTRY

How many fellers you hirin' anywho?

LANCELOT

I am doing the "hiring" dear boy. And don't fill your pretty empty head with such lofty concerns.

COUNTRY

"Lofty?" As in hay loft?

LANCELOT

Aren't you just so precious?

JOSHUA

You da owner?

LANCELOT

I'm the General Manager. That's all you need to know. Let's move on.

ACE

Each of you will develop your own style after imitating others but first, you have to create your own signature "pole position."

Ace grabs the pole with one hand, rotates around it letting gravity take him down to the floor where he poses for a moment, then flips upside down onto the pole and reverse climbs up to do an amazing Routine. All Four FNGs are in awe.

COUNTRY

How'd he --?

JOSHUA

I can't --?

DETROIT

Niiiiiiice.

Ace finishes with a backwards summersault off the pole's top.

ACE

Your time, is always, their money.

LEARNING MONTAGE I: Couldn't be funnier if they cried. All loose their grip while "performing" to hit their heads, fall, curse, trip, and look like fools. Ace smiles while coaching.

ACE

Time's UP!

These "Failing Four" stumble outside complaining and rubbing their bruises as Detroit puts on his red leather jacket.

EXT. ACE OF SPADES - CONTINUOUS

All Four FNG's light cigarettes. Detroit's smells funny.

SLEDGE

Felt like "Boot."

COUNTRY

Felt like --someone's boot?

JOSHUA

En culé, man.

Detroit takes a toke off his Joint then hands it to Joshua.

DETROIT

Man, the only thing you need to worry about, is not being high enough, to do all this shit.

Joshua draws, holds smoke, and passes joint to Country who does same, then offers roach to Sledge who holds up hands.

SLEDGE

Got anything --stronger?

Detroit opens one side of his jacket and unzips its liner to reveal elastic-bands sewn-in holding various prescription bottles and see-through plastic-windows sewn-on which hold pre-packaged baggies inside them. He is a walking pharmacy.

Joshua and Country *cough-exhale* their smoke in surprise.

Sledge tilts his head at Detroit "shopping" with a "*Hmmmm?*"

INT. ACE OF SPADES - MOMENTS LATER

FOUR MORE YOUNG RAW RECRUITS now stand before Ace who points to TOM "TEXAS" TANNER, a huge ripped bodybuilder in a flannel shirt with sleeves torn off at the shoulders. He is Texan.

TEXAS

Tom Tanner from Texas!

LANCELOT

Of course you are dear. All hat and no cattle. Your middle initial wouldn't happen to be "N" would it?

ACE

"Beefcake" is more like it. But since you're as big as your home state let's bulldog you as "TEXAS."

Texas flexes his biceps. Lancelot fans himself, a lot.

KRIS "ARETHA" CLARK, 20s, thin but fit African-American with short buzzed hair, is over-the-top gay and talks too fast. He is the original Medea as "she" shoots a hand high in the air.

ARETHA

Me, me, I'm next!

Aretha stands straightening clothing to perfection, clears throat, then bats huge false-lashes.

LANCELOT

Anytime this century, sweetheart.

Aretha is offended so sings Aretha Franklin's "*Respect*."

ARETHA

"R, E, S, P, E, C, T, take care a' little ole' me!"

Aretha *snap-finger-waves* to Lancelot "*So there*."

ACE

Well if you're gonna' sing on this stage, you'll do it as "ARETHA."

Aretha *fast-claps* hands, then grabs Texas's hand to shake with enthusiasm. Texas breaks free wiping own hand on shirt.

ACE

You're up, Lynryd Skynryd.

MARTIN "FREEBIRD" MILLER, is a Caucasian cross between *Chris Angel* and *Dave Navarro* with long black hair, has black tattoos all over, and always wears the same black paisley shirt. A black skull necklace and black Fedora hat round out his gothic attire. He is offended so sings namesake's song.

FREEBIRD

"And this bird you can not, change-ange-ange-ange-ange!"

ACE

Alrighty then, that's enough off-key singing for one day. So why don't you fly away as "FREEBIRD?"

FREEBIRD

I'm up for that.

Ace turns to sloppy-salute CANNON, mid-20s, blonde hair, blue eyes, high-n-tight, in jeans and athletic-shirt with a *Marine* logo-tattoo on a shoulder. He has the same attitude to match.

ACE

Semper Fi.

CANNON

You in the Corps?

ACE

Nope, saw your tat.

Cannon announces to all as a Drill Instructor.

CANNON

Any of you ever say that honored phrase to me again, I'll kill ya!

TEXAS

(quotes "*Stripes*" movie)
"Lighten up, Francis."

All *laugh* except Cannon who glares at Texas.

ACE
What'd you do in there?

CANNON
Armor!

ACE
Then you roll on as "CANNON."

Cannon two-finger salutes crisp. Texas flips him "The Bird."

INT. ACE OF SPADES - MOMENTS LATER

Earlier Failing-Four now enter the club with *high* clown-grins just as Ace sticks his backwards summersault off the pole.

ACE
Okay, who's first to get into their signature ...?

JOSHUA/COUNTRY/SLEDGE/DETROIT
Pole Position!

LEARNING-MONTAGE II: Earlier incoordination and falling with cursing only now the First Failing Four berate their Four New Brothers with hazing taunts until Texas storms to them breathing like a bull. The Four hecklers hold up their hands.

Aretha shrinks fearful then faints. Ace pours some of his bottled water over Aretha's face reviving who complains.

ARETHA
My mascara?!

ACE
Everyone follow me so I can show you to the dressing room.

JOSHUA
Singular?

LANCELOT
We're all one big dysfunctional family around here, boy-toys.

Ace leads all EIGHT DANCERS into back as Lancelot follows.

INT. ACE OF SPADES DRESSING ROOM - MOMENTS LATER

Cramped former janitor's closet with coat hangars mounted on wood slats around three walls. Plastic chairs are under each hangar. Ace, then Eight Dancers enter, with Lancelot last.

ACE

Everyone get ready.

JOSHUA

For --?

LANCELOT

Your debut, darlinks.

(points to cardboard box)

Your codpiece catchers are in there. And remember, this is not a strip club. No full nudity, ever.

JOSHUA

When's The Opening?

Lancelot pats Joshua's face-cheek like a favorite aunt.

LANCELOT

Aren't you just as cute as a brass button?!

(looks at pocket watch)

Ten Minutes!

Lancelot pockets his watch and exits as Alice's *White Rabbit*.

Ace begins changing. Seven Dancers look at each other "WTF?"

Detroit opens his Rx-jacket wide grinning with a gold tooth.

DETROIT

Show Time.

INT. JOSHUA'S APARTMENT - EARLY NEXT MORNING

Two-bedroom upper floor of a rundown Garden Apartment complex with minimal cheap furniture and an efficiency kitchen.

Door opens and Joshua limps in then dead-falls face-first onto the couch. A cloud of dust rises around him.

His roommate, LINDEN, 20s, African-American, also a mechanic at same garage, shuffles down the hall in BVD's yawning.

LINDEN

Late night, wallflower?

(goes into kitchen)

Your shift starts in a couple of hours you know.

(opens refrigerator)

And your half of the rent --.

(grabs a juice bottle)

Is due today, roomie.

Joshua stands and empties all his pockets on the floor. All around him dollar bills rain. Linden chokes on his juice.

LINDEN

Jesus! You knock over a 7-11?

Joshua shuffles to his bedroom like a zombie.

JOSHUA

Feels like one knocked me over.

Something made of cloth drops out of Joshua pants leg as he closes his bedroom door.

Linden puts bottle back in fridge then picks up the cloth to examine it. It's a thong. It *crunches*. Linden pulls a dollar bill out of its pouch then drops both like electrocuted.

INT. JOSHUA'S GARAGE - LATER THAT WEEK

Linden and Joshua, both in mechanic's coveralls, each work on two different cars. Linden bends over his. Joshua lays under his on a mechanic's creeper so only his shoes stick out.

Becky enters and stands by Joshua's feet with hands on hips.

BECKY

Well?!

No response. Becky kicks one of his shoe soles. No response. She grabs his ankles and rolls him out. He's asleep *snoring*.

BECKY

HEY!

Joshua jerks awake *hitting* his forehead on rocker panel.

JOSHUA

Dégage!

Becky holds a hand out. He yawns reaching in a breast pocket to hand her up a rubber-banded round wad of dollar bills.

BECKY

Roll a stripper?

Linden drops his wrench, *Clang*, then picks it up *chuckling*.

JOSHUA

Really care how, I gets it?

Becky opens the money roll and counts it. She smiles.

BECKY

Not now.

(turns to exit)

Kenny will be ready at six.

Becky walks to her car. Joshua rolls under the car again then shoots back out to jump up and sprint after her.

JOSHUA

Wait!

Becky turns angry. Joshua arrives winded.

JOSHUA

Work a-nuit-ci.

BECKY

Just like you to disappoint her.

JOSHUA

Ouais?! Well at least she don't have me arrested for it!

(breathes deep, relaxes)

Want da money on time? Yes or No?

Becky drops his cash-roll in her purse, *clicks* it shut, then gets in her car like a British Royal.

BECKY

I'll think of something to tell her. --I always do.

Becky drives away. Joshua yells after her.

JOSHUA

Just don't make me da bad-guy!

(turns back to garage)

You always do.

INT. ACE OF SPADES DRESSING ROOM - THAT NIGHT

Like a cattle-pen without the mooing the Eight Dancers mill around each other with sore muscles getting undressed to put on only posing pouches.

Ace lathers himself good and shiny then passes his economy-size bottle of baby oil around.

ACE

Catch phrase in this business ladies is, "get noticed." So buff your buffs to a shiny shine sheen.

Aretha enters wearing a red-fur full-length cape pulled around. Seven Dancers *wolf-whistle*. Aretha flings robe wide open to reveal a thin red leather thong. Aretha smiles then does a front pelvic thrust and a red light flashes inside the G-string's pouch. Ace points to it *chuckling*.

ACE

That's one way to get noticed.

COUNTRY

Where'd you get the duds, dude?

ARETHA

(model-twirls)

Dudette. The boutique where I work.
You all simply must visit sometime.

JOSHUA

(shakes head)

Pas de temps.

ARETHA

Then "it" must simply make the
time, to visit --.

Aretha raises both hands above head and *claps* twice.

TINY, 50s, 5', obese and balding, as creepy a White Cracker as ever a whiz there was, enters. He wears a fully-buttoned wrinkled *Columbo-type* raincoat carrying multiple outfits on hangers and a plastic see-through box of costume T-bars.

ARETHA (CONT'D)

Youuuuuuu!

Christmas came early as the Seven Dancers gather around Tiny and go "shopping." Aretha smiles like a used car salesman.

ARETHA

And we do, have a payment plan.

Detroit two-finger *whistles*, loud. All turn to him.

DETROIT

And I do, have a lay-you-away,
plan.

Detroit opens his jacket and unzips its pharmacy-liner. How about that, a new shipment just came in.

The Seven Dancers look from Detroit to Tiny then back and forth like at a tennis match.

Ahhhh, decisions, decisions.

INT. ACE OF SPADES - LATER THAT NIGHT

Club has a HALF-CROWD of mostly impeccably dressed MALES with a couple of impeccably dirty-minded BIKER-FEMALES.

Joshua finishes his routine with a backwards somersault off the pole. He blind-lands triple-stepping backwards before catching his balance, then poses *Ta-Da* with arms held high.

Males politely *clap* fanning themselves.

Biker Females two-finger *whistle* pointing to their crotches.

BIKER FEMALE

Land on this, Bitch!

Joshua works through Half-Crowd with tips from Biker Females who place their hands deep into his thong's pouch. He giggles like a little girl "Hey that tickles" then goes to the Bar.

Bartender is SATIN, a Drag Queen in platinum *Dolly Parton* wig and breast-form spilling out. A dark spray-tanned Caucasian and Lancelot's live-in lover. At 5'5", Satin is a full-bodied chain-smoker that gives her voice a *Harvey Fierstein* rasp.

JOSHUA

Hey, Satin. Question, who's the club's owner?

SATIN

Own-ers. Plural.

JOSHUA

Okay? So who are ...?

Satin places a "bedazzled" baseball bat on the bar's top.

SATIN

If I tell ya' honey-bumpkin, I'd have to luv-ya to death.

JOSHUA

In that case, give me a whis ...

SATIN

Table number, baby.

JOSHUA

Uh, no, dis is for me.

Satin *tch-tch's* as she squeezes Joshua's cheek so hard she literally shakes his head.

SATIN

You are just soooo adorable!
(releases, explains)
Never ever pay for anything in this
sweet sweet-world, sweetie.

Satin "blows a kiss" to Lancelot who catches it then holds
its fist over his heart swooning.

SATIN

Now you go run along and socialize
with our guests, hon. Ask if they
need their drinks refreshed then
tell them how thirsty "you" are.

Joshua kisses back of "her" hand and goes off as instructed.

Satin looks at her kissed-hand while putting the other on her
"cleavage." She feels burning-eyes and looks over to Lancelot
glaring at her. She bats her long eyelashes smiling innocent.

INT. ACE OF SPADES DRESSING ROOM - LATER THAT NIGHT

Quitting time. Seven Dancers change into street clothes while
telling Set stories and *laughing*. All except Texas who flexes
in their new but obviously very old floor-length mirror.

Lancelot, followed by Ace, enters and fast-claps twice.

LANCELOT

Ladies!
(All get quiet)
Everyone please be here at nine-ish
tomorrow morning. Thank, youuuu!

JOSHUA

Non, I have ...

Lancelot puts a pointer-finger over Joshua's lips.

LANCELOT

Business got off to a slow start so
tomorrow we have the wonderful
opportunity to "get off" on a whole
new customer base.

COUNTRY

A what?

LANCELOT

What?

COUNTRY

I said it first?

LANCELOT

My dear boy!

Lancelot swats Country's thong bare-bottom playfully.

LANCELOT

You're as happy as if you had good sense.

ACE

There's an expo this week-end at the Convention Center.

COUNTRY

What they exposin'?

LANCELOT

Hopefully, their wallets.

ACE

It's Nashville's annual "Southern Women's Show."

Lancelot becomes *P.T. Barnum* waving hands through the air.

LANCELOT

Just think of it! All these sexually frustrated middle-aged women looking to recapture their youth by boutique shopping. What a glorious marketing promotion event.

COUNTRY

You want us to cruise that concrete jungle in just our banana hammocks?

Lancelot smiles mischievous then model-points to a large cardboard box like a TV Host.

LANCELOT

Would you be my darling dearest and hand those out, p-l-e-a-s-e?

Country opens the box. It's full of small black tank-tops and black spandex short-shorts. He tosses one of each to All.

Ace holds his shirt up. The club's name is printed across its back in gold letters with an *Ace of Spades* card as its logo.

Country holds up his itty-bitty black shorts to tilt his head like a dog. These will leave nothing to anyone's imagination.

ACE

We all arrive in a group wearing
these same outfits.

LANCELOT

Where you all will give you out
free admission tickets.

COUNTRY

How we gonna' make more money,
givin' our booty-sweat away free?

LANCELOT

Now don't you hold onto that idea
too long, suga'. It just might die
of loneliness.

Lancelot tweak-squeezes one of Country's bottom cheeks.

LANCELOT

Gentle "men" --the best things in
life are never freely free.

(no response, explains)

No woman will come into our club
alone. But if you hand out only one
ticket to one group of beautiful
belles, they will sing themselves
silly to have a Ladies Night here.

Dancers nod their head except Country who's "*thinkin*" on it.

ACE

Be on time, be sober, be clean. But
above all, be outstanding.

INT. "THE OLD CONVENTION CENTER" IN NASHVILLE - NEXT MORNING

Mostly glass and concrete building in the heart of Nashville.

Stretch-limo pulls up and Eight Ace Dancers exit in black
their short-shorts and Club-shirts staggering like a drunk
Boy Band. Except Ace who drinks a juice carton shaking head.

Ace hands out "free" tickets to all of his Eight Dancers.

COUNTRY

Lancelot a-comin'?

The blacked-out security front seat window lowers to reveal
Lancelot is their driver. He "too-da-loo" waves to them.

LANCELOT

Laissez-faire --fairies!

COUNTRY

Who the what?

JOSHUA

French for, "Let do."

Texas pops a steroid pill, inhales deep, then flexes hard.

TEXAS

"Let do" --THIS!

The Nine Dancers high-five each other then enter main doors.

INT. NASHVILLE CONVENTION CENTER - CONTINUOUS

THE ultimate housewife bazaar, emporium, and marketplace with hundreds of exhibit booths filled by the latest fashions, trendy jewelry, gourmet treats, health, and beauty items.

CONVENTION LADIES, thousands of women of all ages, types, and sizes in all manner of dress and undress mill about shopping.

The Nine Dancers enter and all their mouths fall open as one.

Of course Country's favorite TV-show is "*Gomer Pyle, USMC*."

COUNTRY

"Goll-oll Leeeeeee!"

TEXAS

Looks like an episode a' *Cops*.

JOSHUA

Lions and tigers and beavers ...

ARETHA

Oh My!

DETROIT

Who here needs a little courage?

The Other Seven Dancers go "hands up" except Texas who pops another steroid pill. Ace turns away pretending not to see.

FREEBIRD

(as *The Cowardly Lion*)

"Ain't it the truth, ain't it the truth."

Detroit taps Cocaine on the back of each willing Dancer's hand. They all look at each other then *snort* individually. It sounds like a pig farm.

Ace shakes his head then goes hands-in and his Eight Dancers put theirs in. All hands go down then up and break.

DANCERS

ACES!

Like sharks, all Dancers swim out into the sea of femininity.

CONVENTION MONTAGE: Various humorous interactions between one Dancer and a LADIES GROUP as said Ace dance-flirts sexy while their affected Ladies fan themselves faster and faster.

ELDERLY LADY, wearing a sun dress, sits in a wheelchair by herself looking lonely. Freebird spreads her knees then does a head-stand between her legs with his butt in her face. He rolls "their" wheelchair while still upside-down through all the other FROZEN LADIES waving and carnival-barking. (*true*)

FREEBIRD

Who wants free passes? To Our Show!

All Frozen Ladies change into Frenzied Ones chasing behind while Elderly Lady smiles huge having the time of her life.

FIREMEN MONTAGE: Shirtless Nashville Volunteer FIREMEN wearing just suspender-pants are called up on the temp-stage for a show which consists of flexing their biceps. Convention Ladies *clap* politely. Firemen finish and exit off the stage.

Aretha works her way through Convention Ladies getting them to *clap* to her beat as the Other Eight Dancers prance onto the stage doing two-man-team acrobatic-dancing as one makes a "step" with his locked-hands so the other can backward-somersault off it. Convention Ladies go wilder than wild.

SECURITY GUARDS, overweight in grown-into uniforms, arrive to all the commotion then question Aretha, "*Where's your pass?*"

Ace flips off the stage to distract them then All 9 Dancers race down the hall being chased by same two Security Guards.

Convention Ladies *clap* and yell encouragement to both groups.

EXT. CONVENTION CENTER - MOMENTS LATER

The Nine Dancers exit the building running and *laughing* to pile into their earlier limo which speeds off.

Security Guards exit same doors but are now having mini heart-attacks while pointing after the limo and *wheezing* horrible unable to talk.

INT. DANCERS LIMO - MOMENTS LATER

A bottle of champagne now sits in an ice bucket.

The driver's privacy window comes down.

LANCELOT

Cheerful cheers to my cherubs!

Dancers *laugh* hysterical as Ace "pops" their bottle open.

CANNON

Incoming!

The cork barely misses Lancelot who closes his window miffed.

LANCELOT

Thankless animals.

Freebird opens the sun-roof and stands up through it. Ace stands through it with the bottle and they drink. Other Seven Dancers try to fit through but can't so take off their shirts to sweaty-squeeze up and finally do. Think oily sardines.

Driver's privacy window comes down again. Lancelot now only sees butts and bulges. He fans himself fast smiling silly.

EXT. DANCERS LIMO - MOMENTS LATER

Nashville DRIVERS are not used to the sight of shirtless men standing out a limo's roof waving black shirts over their heads drinking champagne and "Yahooing." Ring out the old.

INT. ACE OF SPADES - THAT NIGHT

Club is now packed with Convention Ladies ready to cut loose.

Texas is their first performer with tan skin baby-oil glossy.

Convention Ladies lose their minds then their inhibitions as Texas flexes while hanging off the pole. It is babe-bedlam.

CONVENTION LADIES

Take it off! Take it off! Take it,
ALLLLLLL OFF!

EXT. ACE OF SPADES - MOMENTS LATER

The Ace Dancers "Convention" antics have spread through the town's grapevine like cheap wine.

A Media Van with "eye" logo painted on its side pulls up. Its CAMERAMAN, African-American, and REPORTER, a blonde Southern Belle, exit ready to film their nightly new's ROSR report.

CAMERAMAN

Ready?

Reporter *clears* her throat then "throws head" to tussle hair.

Cameraman gives a silent "3, 2, 1, Go" finger-countdown.

REPORTER

I'm standing outside Nashville's latest late-night night spot, the Ace of Spades club.

(points up to its sign)

Its an uninhibited male strip club whose dancers certainly got "uninhibited" today during the annual Southern Women's Show at the Convention Center. They caused quite a commotion. Both in and out.

Screams from Convention Ladies inside the club echo out.

REPORTER

And it sounds like they're still causing one inside --here. Is Nashville's conservative night-life ready for male pole-dancing?

Out-of-control *shrieks* and howls now emanate from the club.

REPORTER

Guess we'll all find out together. This is Eyewitness News, keeping an eye out ...

Aretha exits the club in his thong running with arms flailing being chased by beyond-crazed *screaming* CAUCASIAN LADIES.

REPORTER (CONT'D)

And getting an eye full --of Nashville's newest and very entertaining, entertainment.

Camera's light goes off and Cameraman lowers his camera.

REPORTER

Do we have time to go inside?

Her's is not a question.

INT. BEAU'S HOUSE - SIMULTANEOUS

Living room of another small rambler modestly decorated.

BEAU BEAUFORT, 20's, Assistant to Nashville's most powerful Town Councilman, is watching this same news program on his television with mouth open. Reporter signs off then Beau's phone *rings*. He jumps then answers to its unheard voice.

BEAU

Yes, I saw it... Yes, I agree.

...Yes, I'll come in early.

(hangs up)

What a dick.

INT. NASHVILLE'S CITY COUNCIL CHAMBER - NEXT DAY

Historic Metropolitan Courthouse in downtown Nashville has a small chamber inside resembling a miniature version of the *U.S. House of Representatives*.

HAROLD HAUSER, 50s, Caucasian, balding with a potbelly in a three-piece suit he's grown out of, *pounds* a gavel red-faced.

COUNCIL MEMBERS, all older Caucasian males, stand arguing with each other in their also "grown-into" tweed suits.

Hauser hits his gavel so hard it *breaks*. He throws the gavel's "head" across the room breaking something else.

HAUSER

I agree! But who?!

Beau walks into the room wearing the same-style suit as Hauser only it "fits" him carrying some files.

ALL Council Members stop to stare at Beau. He can hear their pin drop. Beau looks behind himself then slowly turns back.

BEAU

Whaaaaat?

INT. ACE OF SPADES - THAT NIGHT

The club is now Nashville's "hottest spot." It's packed again with a SECOND FULL CROWD, looking same, but made up of more of Nashville's sexually frustrated house-maidens. There are just so many of them, you know.

Cool-Aid is in his booth hyping up the place.

Satin is behind the bar wearing a bedazzled *Dolly Parton* cowgirl outfit.

BRIDAL PARTY at Table 7, all drunk white young females, are using their friend's wedding as an excuse to become sluts.

INT. ACE OF SPADES DRESSING ROOM - MOMENTS LATER

Dancers are slathering baby oil on each other's backs except Texas who is flex-watching himself in the wall-mirror then sits to tie-off a bulging bicep and injects a clear liquid.

DETROIT

Man, that shit'll kill ya.

Detroit holds up an antique leather Doctor's Satchel and jiggles it to the sound of *clinking* bottles inside.

DETROIT

Whereas this shit, will make you
"kill."

COUNTRY

(to Texas)

Speaking of brother, any way you
could back off a little so the rest
of us can get better tips?

Texas kisses both his biceps *laughing*.

TEXAS

Fuck off --"brother".

Lancelot sticks his head in the doorframe.

LANCELOT

Bridal Party at Table 7. Whoever
gets them in a Private Room gets
fifty bucks bonus cash.

TEXAS

Guess who that's gonna' be, girls?

Complaint-murmuring throughout Dancers as Texas strut-exits.

JOSHUA

(*Fay doh-doh*, Cajun party)

Man, I wish he go on a fais do-do.

Cannon elbow-nudges Joshua who looks. Cannon opens a hand. It has three shiny long bolts in it.

CANNON

Oh, he's going to a party alright.
Wait for his "signature" dismount.

Aretha was buffing her perfectly painted toenails listening and drops the buffing-block to slap both hands over her mouth in shock then gossip-whispers to the Other Six Dancers.

All Dancers look at Cannon's bolts, then bolt for the door.

INT. ACE OF SPADES MAIN ROOM - MOMENTS LATER

Entire room is in silent-awe watching Texas glide gracefully around the pole with perfect muscle control. He is grace in motion and works his way to the top of the pole as Cool-Aid's music reaches its crescendo.

Canon and Joshua smile evil then fist-bump without looking.

CANNON

Have a nice trip.

JOSHUA

See you next Fall.

Texas coils his feet under him against the pole and launches backwards as the pole's fourth loose-bolt falls out and its top bracket releases. Texas and his Alamo-pole going flying in different directions. Second Crowd *gasps*.

Aretha *screams* high-pitched and faints. Joshua catches her.

Texas lands on his back in the middle of Table 7. BRIDE, wearing a plastic tiara, has an unlit cigar in her mouth.

Texas smiles, grimaces, reaches under his back, and pulls out her lighter. He lights her cigar. She puffs, licks its end, then rolls it between her fingers slow smiling sexual.

TEXAS

Which one of you lovely, lovely,
young ladies, would like to take me
upstairs for a very, very private,
private party?

Bridal Party jumps up to ramrod attention like a *Platoon on Review*. Bride takes off engagement ring to put in her purse.

Texas takes Bride's hand to lead her up a narrow staircase next to Cool-Aid's booth. Her entourage follows like Pied Piper mice *giggling* and pushing on each other's shoulders.

The Other Nine Dancers look at their now fallen friend, the "dead" chrome pole, lying reflective on the walkway.

Country turns to Cannon becoming *Stork* from "Animal House."

COUNTRY

"What the hell we supposed to do
now, ya' morons?"

Cannon hands Country his three bolts and the matching open-end wrench to Joshua then goes to Cool-Aid's booth.

Rest of Dancers look to Lancelot who head-motions "*Fix it!*"

Dancers run to put back up their pole holding a pose like the *Iwo Jima* flag-raising soldiers. Crowd camera-flashes go off.

Cannon smiles most beguiling at Cool-Aid who hands over his microphone. Cannon *thumps* it and feedback makes Second Crowd complain. Cannon smiles beguiling like a little boy at them.

SECOND CROWD

Awwwwwww.

Cannon whispers a request to Cool-Aid who puts on a record. Scratching, then *The Beatles* "Hey, Jude" plays loud.

Second Crowd now lean forward as one in their seats.

ALL are transported to the *Grand Ole Opry* as Cannon *sings* with the voice of an angel. Cannon glides through the club's tables encouraging Second Crowd to join in *singing*. (*true*)

Sitting in a dark corner in back is Beau dressed in pristine casual pastel clothes. Cannon arrives at his table and offers him a hand. Beau shrinks. Cannon gently takes Beau's hand and pulls him to standing then puts an arm around his shoulder as both sway to the music. Beau has never felt so accepted.

All raise their arms to sway hands while *singing* in sync.

Dancers on now repaired stage do an impromptu synchronized modern dance interpretation around their "fixed" idol-pole.

Nashville's first night-club kumbaya sings on "*Hey Jude*."

SECOND CROWD

"Nah, nah, nah-nah-nah, nah, nah-
nah-nah, nah, Hey-ey, Jude" ...etc.

TALENT AGENT, 40s, Caucasian, slicked-back black hair in a plaid suit, watches from a back corner table smiling through blackened teeth. He spits tobacco juice in his empty glass.

INT. JOSHUA'S APARTMENT - EARLY NEXT MORNING

Joshua stumbles in wearing jeans and t-shirt to collapse on the couch as always. Linden shuffles down the hall waking up.

LINDEN

Burning the candle beyond both
ends, bro.

(opens freezer)

I don't know how you do it?

Linden takes out an open can of orange juice from the freezer and stirs two tablespoons of its frozen contents into a glass of tap water then drinks.

JOSHUA

(puts arm over eyes)

Drugs help. Besides, like all da
fringed, fringe benefits.

Joshua smiles big with last night's euphoric memories.

LINDEN

Yeah, well, watch out living on the
"fringe" my friend. It can come
back to bite you. I know.

(drinks more juice)

Oh, uh, Mom wants you to drop by
her place. Something about, "a
business arrangement?"

Joshua shuffles off to bed.

JOSHUA

You do it, T-bud. I be beat.

Joshua closes his door. Linden puts away frozen juice-can.

LINDEN

Already got one "business"
entertainer in the family, bud-bud.

INT. AUNTIE'S STRIP CLUB - DAYS LATER

Typical strip club, dark, dank, disgusting. Black floor tiles, recessed ceiling lights, and lucite elevated dance floor lit from underneath with two poles, and bar stools. Tables with chairs are around its raised dance-floor with a "Dancer's Only" dressing room door in the back.

Behind its bar is MERCEDES, African-American, 20s, with a Mercedes logo tattooed in gold on one shoulder. Once a soft-beauty, she's now a hard-pretty. She is doing inventory.

Joshua, in different jeans and t-shirt wearing sunglasses, enters and goes to her.

JOSHUA
Play Diamond for me.

Mercedes communication-*screams* as only a truly angry black woman can.

MERCEDES
DIAMOND! Get your black ass out here! Some white boy wants some!

JOSHUA
(*Ahl kree, "She screams"*)
Alle crie.

MERCEDES
Bite me.

JOSHUA
Sound guud.

Mercedes moves so fast Joshua can't react as she *slams* his face on the bar holding it down with one hand while other arm locks-in a reverse half-nelson. He's pinned. She *growls*.

MERCEDES
Snowball in hell.

DIAMOND, African-American, mid-40's but still a MILF, enters from the back wearing a crop-top with boob-bottoms exposed. Her perfect but enhanced breasts never bounce. They can't.

DIAMOND
Stop treating the customers like practice dummies or we won't have any dummies to practice on!
(becomes a lady again)
"Comments" --come with the job.

Mercedes dry-spits to the side as she releases Joshua.

DIAMOND
The Mechanic?

Diamond hugs him a little too friendly then introduces him.

DIAMOND
This is my son's roommate.
(sloppy-kisses his cheek)
How you doin', baby? Thanks for stopping by. What'cha havin'?

Joshua rubs his sore neck.

JOSHUA
Ice would be nice.

Diamond waves both hands "Stoppsss." Her painted fingernails are curled-in two-inches long. She turns to Mercedes.

DIAMOND
Suds for the man.

JOSHUA
No really, just ice, with seltzer.

MERCEDES
Riding the wagon, buckaroo?

JOSHUA
Just waterin' da horses, ma'am.

Diamond squeeze-tugs one of Joshua's cheeks.

DIAMOND
You're just sooo adorable! Makes me wanna' have you and Linden move in.

JOSHUA
Sure he love dat. Me bangin' his mom on my headboard.

DIAMOND
He's heard worse. How is he?

JOSHUA
He's actually a good guy. What up?

Diamond hand-motions to a table where both sit.

DIAMOND
Caught your act. You're "actually" good, too. Got me thinking, what if you and your friends did a show here? Might bring in a whole new clientele.

JOSHUA
Talk wit' our manager, Lancelot. You already sound like him. Sure you want what we bring?

Diamond's laugh is *explosive*.

DIAMOND
Can't be worse than what we gots!

Mercedes brings Joshua's drink putting it on the table, *hard*, spilling some, then goes back behind the bar.

JOSHUA
(head-motions to Mercedes)
Who da Karate Kid?

DIAMOND
(snaps serious)
Uh, uh, beetle. Keep your juice to yourself. She had a tough time growing up, tougher than mine, so she don't particularly like "men."

JOSHUA
"Like" or trust?

DIAMOND
What's the difference?

JOSHUA
Maybe she not find --.
(rubs sore neck more)
Da right one?

DIAMOND
(holds his hand)
And brother, you "ain't" it. We're talking business here so keep your head, both of them, focused on "our" business. You feel me --.
(squeezes his hand hard)
Son?

JOSHUA
(winces in pain)
Bien sûr. --"Mom."

Diamond snaps back into *Ms. Entertainment* and now kisses the back of his hand.

DIAMOND
Let's make some money, honey!

INT. ACE OF SPADES DRESSING ROOM - THAT NIGHT

Seven Dancers, minus Aretha, are oiling themselves.

Detroit passes around a hand-mirror with six lines of Cocaine on it and a small coffee-straw for inhaling each.

One-by-one, each Dancer snorts a Line, except Ace who drinks a protein shake shaking his head at Texas who is shooting-up.

Aretha enters wearing what looks like a boy's cowboy outfit. A too-small cowboy hat, mini-leather vest, matching leather thong, toy double-pistoled leather holster, and cowboy boots.

The Seven Dancers *wolf-whistle* except Texas who releases his arm's tie-off to put away his "kit."

COUNTRY

You "Rusty" from that doggie T.V. show?

TEXAS

Look more like "*Rin Tin Tin*."

Aretha "*Meows*" at Texas then turns-on her costume. Cowboy hat has LED lights; around its brim, vest around its seams, with holster and boot lights following both patterns.

All the Other Eight Dancers, even Ace, are impressed.

JOSHUA

Where'd you get that?!

ARETHA

I keep telling you to stop by my boutique. But since Mr. Muhammad still won't come to my mountain --.
(puckers lips at Texas)
I brought Tiny here again. And we have bunches and bunches of pretty new costumes out in the trunk of his pink Cadillac.

Other Dancers go wide-eyed interested, even Texas.

ARETHA

So what do you say, girls?

Aretha sings Bruce Springsteen's new hit "*Pink Cadillac*."

ARETHA

"Well honey it ain't your money,
'Cause baby I got plenty of that.
I love you for your Pink Cadillac."

Aretha exits singing/dancing out the dressing room's back Fire Door. The other Eight Dancers follow her also singing.

EIGHT DANCERS

"Crushed velvet seats, Riding in the back, Oozing down the street. Waving to the girls, Feeling out of sight. Spending all my money, On a Saturday night!"

The fire door *slams* shut behind them as Lancelot enters.

LANCELOT
Show time, ladies!
(looks around empty room)
Ladies?

Lancelot wipes his forehead with his ascot's end.

INT. ACE OF SPADES - LATER THAT NIGHT

Club is packed with a THIRD FULL CROWD now evenly matched GAY MEN and GAY WOMEN in pristine pastels who are, against their polite inner-nature, mumble-complaining.

Lancelot steps onto the stage as M.C.

LANCELOT
Sorry for the slight delay ladies
and gentle men.
(looks to Satin)
Even those, who aren't that gentle.

"Dolly Parton Cowgirl" Satin is wearing a large heart pendant as a necklace. A light comes on inside it flash-beating.

LANCELOT
But I think you'll find your wait,
was so worth this while as we --.
(becomes a *Circus Barker*)
The world famous and some might
call infamous, Ace of Spades club
proudly presents --THE MEN OF ACES!

All lights go off then the sound of Lancelot tripping and falling trying to exit the stage in the dark.

LANCELOT (O.S.)
Fuck, shit, piss, god damn.

Ceiling chandeliers come back on. Freebird now stands on the stage dressed in all black leather *BDSM* gear with a long chain leading off the stage.

THIRD CROWD
Uuuuuuuuuu --.

Cool-Aid plays a slow extended version of Springsteen's "*Pink Cadillac*."

Freebird pulls on his chain and Country crawls out on all-fours wearing a metal collar and thong with a pink fur-tail.

Third Crowd's Gay Men sit up straight fanning themselves.

Freebird and Country do an *S&M Routine* that could be banned in most free countries. Check that, all civilized countries.

Beau sits in the back in the shadows. He pulls out a small camera and takes motorized pictures with low-light film so no flash. He puts camera away, opens a small pen knife, and begins cutting superficial lines across one wrist *crying*.

EXT. HAUSER'S OFFICE BUILDING - NEXT MORNING

Nashville's high-rise ode to New York City is confined to only four city blocks. Three of the four skyscrapers are bank headquarters. The fourth is Hauser's law firm.

INT. HAUSER'S OFFICE - MOMENTS LATER

Hauser's office is on the 27th floor. His outside wall is entirely glass overlooking Nashville with required over-compensating huge wood desk and throne-like desk chair behind it. Dark cherry wood chairs with red leather cushions are in front of his desk. Beau sits in one taking notes.

Hauser sits behind his desk smoking a Stogie and examining Beau's last-night Ace of Spades pictures.

HAUSER

Well if this won't do it, don't know what will.

BEAU

Thank you, sir. Am I dismissed?

Hauser *slaps* an open-hand on his desk like killing a bug.

HAUSER

Son a' bees-wax!

BEAU

Excuse me?

HAUSER

S, O, B!

BEAU

Excuse, meeee?!

Hauser nods smiling at the pictures and blows smoke rings.

HAUSER

Stop askin' me 'cause you won't get none. No sir, the answer was starin' me right in the tuchus.

BEAU

I know the feeling.
(to Hauser)
What was, uh, is, sir?

HAUSER

We'll license 'em outta business!

Hauser is so pleased with himself he offers a cigar to Beau who holds both hands up "No."

BEAU

How, sir?

HAUSER

Weren't you listenin' to me, boy?!
I swear, sometimes you act so dumb,
makes one think if you aimed for
the ground --you'd miss.

Hauser takes back his "offered" cigar then walks the floor like a maestro using unlit cigar to conduct his thoughts.

HAUSER

A new Business Board! And as its founder and first Chairman, my first act will be to call a meeting of the City Council asking for passage of a new, "Sexually Oriented Business license."

BEAU

An S.O.B. License? So all dancers will have to buy one. Is that it?

HAUSER

Just the male ones, nummy!
(snaps fingers)
Not only have to pay to get one,
but have to carry it on their
person at all times. Yes, sir!

BEAU

How can they do that, sir?

HAUSER

Pin it on their donkey for all I care! Just as long as it's on 'em.

Hauser waves Beau off *snapping* his fingers repeatedly.

HAUSER (CONT'D)
Starting tonight!

Beau stops at the door then asks with his back to Hauser.

BEAU
I take it, you want me to go back
in there again? Tonight? --*Sir*?

HAUSER
Do one-legged ducks swim in a
circle?

Beau turns around more than just uncomfortable.

BEAU
Sir, I'm really not comfortable,
going "in" there.

Hauser puts out his cigar stub in the ashtray, rolls the
earlier "offered" one near an ear, then snips its end off in
a miniature guillotine on his desk.

HAUSER
Eight men walk into a bar to
announce they're all Gay brothers.
"But don't worry none, we're only
here 'cause we loves Country
Western." Bartender asks nervous,
"Don't you have any gal-folk in
your family?" They nod back sayin',
"Sure, but Mom don't like music."
(flat-palm *slaps* desk)
You bet your sweetie-pie ass you're
going in! Call me when they start
galavantin' and police'll raid the
place to give 'em the good news.

Hauser waves Beau's pictures in the air like a trophy.

HAUSER
Couple a' more a' these, and I can
shut Gomorrah down. Right up to
their G.D. Sodomized asses.

Hauser back-hand waves for Beau to leave "*Shoo*" who does.

HAUSER
I swear, that boy's slower than
cream risin' on buttermilk.

INT. OUTSIDE HAUSER'S OFFICE - SIMULTANEOUS

Beau stands outside leaning back against Hauser's door.

BEAU

When you take your dog for a walk,
do you both use the same tree?

(as *Jeff Foxworthy*)

"Causssse --you just might be a
Redneck."

Beau goes to his desk shaking his head.

INT. ACE OF SPADES DRESSING ROOM - THAT NIGHT

All Dancers, except Freebird, oil themselves up in different thong-costumes. Aretha is in a pink thong with feather boa.

Freebird enters wearing a loincloth and carrying two *Poi* handled-chains with wicks on their ends. He uses a plant-sprayer to spray arms and chest with something shiny-thick.

COUNTRY

Startin' ta wilt?

FREEBIRD

Flame gel.

The Other Dancers stare at each other then say in unison.

DANCERS

"Flame?"

JOSHUA

Do Lancelot know about your
Fougassé?

Freebird grabs his two *Poi*, a tube of White Gas, and exits.

FREEBIRD

Everyone will, in a moment.

Other Dancers stare at each other then race-out in unison.

INT. ACE OF SPADES - MOMENTS LATER

Room is dark. Cool-Aid plays a driving-drum *Buddy Rich* song.

One flame is seen, then a second one, then they twirl around.

Stage lights come up to show Freebird dance-twirling his *Poi*.

FOURTH FULL CROWD, a mixture of all the other Crowds, have absolutely no memory recall of this sight in their Nashville-noggins and are quite literally, spellbound quiet.

Freebird is frustrated at their lack of response so squeezes some White Gas across the stage and lights it by swinging one Poi's flame down near it.

The stage *flames-up*. Fourth Crowd slides back astonished.

Lancelot sits at the bar sipping an umbrella drink. He spit-takes seeing his stage on fire. He looks at Satin concerned who's watching with her chin in one hand and elbow on bar.

SATIN

Gonna' need to buy Performer
Insurance, baby.

No reaction from Fourth Crowd so Freebird sprays more White Gas but some gets on his arms and his Poi lights them.

FOURTH CROWD

Uuuuuu --! Uhhhh --?

Freebird is not in pain because of his protective gel so does entire pole dance with arms on fire. When finished, he holds both arms out to sides "*Ta-da*." Crickets from Fourth Crowd.

Freebird extinguishes his flames with a wet towel then walks through Fourth Crowd smiling and looking for tips. Each table looks away from him like he's homeless at a stop-light.

The Six Dancers rush to exit into the back as Aretha steps up on the stage.

Freebird storms out tip-less to the dressing room. (*true*)

INT. ACE OF SPADES DRESSING ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Five Dancers, except Cannon who is shooting-up steroids, are snorting Cocaine from Detroit's mirror.

Ace drinks "*Sportz-Aidz*" pretending not to notice them.

FREEBIRD

Nothing! I literally set myself on
fire and Noth-Ing! No tips at all!

Freebird kicks Cannon's gym bag across the small room.

Cannon jumps up grabbing Freebird's throat and plants him against a locker then smashes a fist in its door denting it.

CANNON

Calm, down.

Cannon releases Freebird who *coughs* recovering still angry.

DETROIT

Well, know what Walt Disney said?

All look. Detroit closes his Doctor's Satchel.

DETROIT

"You can design, create, and build the most wonderful place in the world, but it takes people, to make your dream a reality."

FREEBIRD

What the "f" are you talking about?

DETROIT

I'm just sayin' ...

ACE

He's "just saying" you gave your audience something so new, they weren't ready to understand it.

Freebird is "coming down" when they all hear police *whistles* and commotion out in the lobby. All Dancers exit running.

INT. ACE OF SPADES - CONTINUOUS

Dancers enter running then freeze in astonishment.

Pandemonium as Fourth Crowd runs for the exits with Nashville RIOT POLICE, in full riot gear, are raiding their club.

Aretha is held by TWO BIGGEST COPS whimpering high-pitched.

ARETHA

Can't we all just get along?

Lancelot is in hand-cuffs as his TWO MORE COPS now circle behind the bar for Satin who brings out her bedazzled bat.

SATIN

All you have to do sugar dumplin's is just ask --nicely.

Two More Cops look at each other then give high the "circle" finger-sign. Satin turns around and is hand-cuffed behind then both her and Lancelot are escorted away brusquely.

SATIN

Watch the hair!

SEVERAL MORE COPS handcuff all Eight Dancers and Cool-Aid behind then lead them out.

Hauser with a stogie and Beau, both in identical suits, stand in the back. Hauser *slaps* Beau on the back.

HAUSER

Good job, boy! Sensational.

Hauser exits the club blowing "victory" smoke rings.

Beau looks around the now disheveled club with over-turned chairs, then falls onto his knees, and breaks down *sobbing*.

INT. NASHVILLE'S NIGHT COURT - NOW MIDNIGHT

All Club Personnel with Dancers still in their skimpy costumes sit in the courtroom pews.

African-American MALE BAILIFF in full Sheriff's uniform enters from the side-door.

MALE BAILIFF

All rise!

Everyone stands as MALE JUDGE, Caucasian, 50s, in judicial robe, enters. He goes to sit but instead freezes gazing out at his gallery of *Folies Bergère* on Crack.

MALE JUDGE

What the --?

Male Judge falls into his chair bewildered.

MALE BAILIFF

Be seated.

Everyone sits except the PROSECUTOR wearing a cheap off-the-rack wrinkled suit. He has a thick Mississippi-mud accent.

MALE JUDGE

What in the wild wild worls of
sports have you brought me,
Counselor?

PROSECUTOR

Ya' Hona', what we got hair, is a
fail-ya' to communee-cate. And ...

Male Judge cuts-off Prosecutor with a thousand-yard stare.

CLERK, 20s female, butch haircut, sits at her desk next to Male Judge's bench and reads their "Charge" dispassionate.

PROSECUTOR

Failure to conform with a brand new city ordinance, sir.

MALE JUDGE

How new?

Hauser stands up in the far back and straightens his suit.

HAUSER

All sexually oriented male dance performers must be duly registered with our proud city's newly formed "Office of Business" license.

MALE JUDGE

How new?!

Hauser answers *coughing* so he's impossible to understand.

MALE JUDGE

Say when?

PROSECUTOR

This afternoon, your Honor.

Male Judge navigates his ocean of human flotsam searching.

MALE JUDGE

Who's in charge of this, *whatever*?

Lancelot slowly raises a hand. Satin adjusts her wig.

MALE JUDGE

When were you notified of this "new" license?

LANCELOT

Just now, your Honor.

Male Judge stares dead-pan at Hauser then slow turns his head to glare at Prosecutor while still talking to Lancelot.

MALE JUDGE

Is it your intention to comply with said "new" ordinance?

SATIN

First thing in the morning, your highness.

Male Judge now needs a nap. He *strikes* his gavel on pad.

MALE JUDGE
Case Dismissed!

Courtroom erupts in *cheers*. Male Judge keeps *smashing* gavel until breaking its handle. Everyone freezes silent.

MALE JUDGE
Pending full compliance.

Male Judge tosses broken-handle over a shoulder and exits.

Everyone waits until Male Judge leaves then Gallery *erupts* again. Proscecutor goes to Hauser who is fuming.

HAUSER
You can forget about any
endorsement next election, *boy*.

Beau sits in the back and lowers his head smiling.

INT. AUNTIE'S STRIP CLUB - NEXT NIGHT

AUNTIE'S AUDIENCE is mainly FEMALE, 30s-40s, all ethnics, with some male redneck TRUCK DRIVERS.

OLD STRIPPER dances 1970's style on the stage to jukebox music. Her sagging breasts occasionally slap her in the face.

Mercedes works behind the bar.

Joshua exits from back in a new costume. Diamond approaches.

DIAMOND
Mmm-mm, those are some nice garms,
darlin'. Where'd you get 'em?

JOSHUA
One of our own works in a boutique.

Diamond's expression sours as she points to a back table.

DIAMOND
That --boo-tee-kee?

Sitting at a far corner-table in the shadows is Tiny wearing a cheap suit with his tie hidden by an even cheaper *London Fog rip-off* gathered-up around him with hands in its pockets.

Joshua nods.

Diamond shivers.

DIAMOND

Some of the girls try to shop there
but he ain't interested in our
usual "special needs" discount.

Music ends. Old Stripper exits stage. Diamond head-motions.

DIAMOND

You're up, baby. You hangin'?

Joshua opens coat to show his new business license reduced to
credit-card size and laminated hanging from his G-String.

DIAMOND

I expected --bigger.

Mercedes gives an explosive "Ha" from behind the bar.

JOSHUA

Just like love --it grows.

Mercedes gives out an even louder "HA!"

Joshua steps up onto the stage.

SOLO POLE DANCE SEQUENCE: Joshua feels challenged and starts
slow then builds into a frantic but sexy dance Set.

Female Truck Drivers go wild. Male Truck Drivers drown their
disappointment while looking away.

Diamond looks overtop her purple-framed glasses at Mercedes.

DIAMOND

The boy's got some moves.

MERCEDES

Like a beast.

DIAMOND

Then why don't you go tame him --
Beauty?

Diamond steps behind the bar. Mercedes shakes her head, pulls
a glass out of the sink's soapy-water and dries it with a bar-
towel. Diamond takes both while side-hitting her hip into
Mercedes's who makes a face then she goes up on the stage.

Joshua is surprised.

Both Male and Female Truck Drivers are pleasantly surprised.

Juke Box record changes.

POLE DANCE SEQUENCES: Mercedes strips out of jeans, t-shirt, and bra with elegance to reveal a sequined-thong. She does a beautiful contemporary-style dance-set to dismount back-flipping onto one knee then sweeps a hand from Joshua to the pole for her challenge "*Do better*" as the record changes. Joshua bows "*Mi-lady*" then *snaps* fingers in-time to music to do a Jazz-routine that rivals *Bob Fosse's* best on Broadway. His dismount also lands him on one knee beside Mercedes.

DUAL DANCE: Joshua stands offering hand down. She hesitates then takes it standing. He pulls her in tight. She squirms. Their eyes meet and sparks explode. Record changes. They do a ballroom-Tango using their pole as a third partner to rival *Fred Astaire*. They finish. Joshua bows. Mercedes curtsseys.

Both Audiences go wild *clapping* and two-finger *whistling*.

Tiny *claps* fast and furious in the back trying to keep his unbuttoned raincoat closed with just his elbows.

Mercedes and Joshua work the Audience for their tips. Females linger a little too long with their fingers in his G-string.

Mercedes notices and harrumphs as she dresses then scurries behind the bar where Diamond still works. Mercedes is angry.

MERCEDES

Men.

DIAMOND

With you on that one, girl. But
until dildos pay our bills --.

Joshua finishes his strut at Tiny's table who, one-handed, puts a business card in Joshua's banana hammock.

JOSHUA

What's that?

TINY

"Special Needs" discount.

Joshua notices Tiny's coat seems to have a live animal trapped under it.

JOSHUA

Uh --thanks?

Joshua goes to Mercedes.

JOSHUA

So you're a trained dancer? Where?

DIAMOND

Two months at Juilliard.

JOSHUA

New York City?! What happened?

MERCEDES

Men.

New record *plays*. NEW STRIPPER steps up onto the stage.

Joshua has to yell over the music at Mercedes.

JOSHUA

Having a fais do-do at my place
tomorrow night!

MERCEDES

Why do I care?!

JOSHUA

One of our guys got a spot on "Star
Search!" Manager saw him sing at
Ace!

DIAMOND

Your apartment's too small! Have
everyone come over to our house!

JOSHUA

Can't! Have daughter-duty dis week-
end!

DIAMOND

Bring her along! She can nap in my
bedroom!

Joshua thinks, is not sure, then his eyes meet Mercedes.

JOSHUA

Sound like fun! Seven 0'!

Joshua turns to watch the New Stripper.

Mercedes glares at Diamond who shrugs "What?"

EXT. DIAMOND'S HOUSE - NEXT NIGHT

Two-story painted pink with a flowerbed in a lower-class
neighborhood. Multiple cars are parked at its curb.

Joshua parks his motorcycle with Kenny riding behind him. She
dismounts first then him. Both take off their helmets.

KENNY

You're won't abandon me will you?

Joshua picks her up in his arms.

JOSHUA

Never, ever, darlin'.

He hangs their helmets on side-mirrors then carries her in his arms up to the front door and *rings* its doorbell.

INT. DIAMOND'S HOUSE - MOMENTS LATER

Inexpensive but clean furniture with pink curtains. No one is seen but *music* can be heard coming up from its basement.

Mercedes exits from basement stairs and answers the door dressed same as earlier.

Kenny sticks out a hand. Mercedes hesitates then shakes it.

KENNY

Hi, I'm Kenny.

MERCEDES

I'm Mercedes.

KENNY

Like the car?

Mercedes releases and turns sideways to show her tattoo.

KENNY

"The best or nothing?"

MERCEDES

Usually, "nothing."

Mercedes steps aside and Joshua enters putting Kenny down. Mercedes closes the door vexed.

MERCEDES

Didn't think you were coming?

KENNY

We can't miss Sledge singing?

JOSHUA

What'd you tell Mom?

KENNY

Sleep-over.

KENNY

That's my girl.

Joshua smiles at Mercedes who shakes her head disinterested and exits back downstairs.

Joshua takes Kenny's hand to follow.

INT. BEAU'S LIVING ROOM - LATER SAME NIGHT

Beau is curled-up on his couch with a bowl of popcorn watching "*Star Search*" on his small television. He listens bored to the famous late-night second-banana MODERATOR.

MODERATOR (FILTERED)

And noooooowwwwww, a former fellow
Marine, all the way from Nashville,
Tennessee! Heeeeerrre's --!

TV INSERT: Cannon rides out from behind the curtain on an all chromed motorcycle wearing a white *Evel Knievel* patriotic cowboy outfit with LED lights around its trim.

Beau spit-takes his popcorn sitting up then hurries to clean up his mess while watching.

MODERATOR

One of our own, and now yours.
(*drum roll* off-stage)
Ladies and gentlemen. --Cannon!

TV INSERT: STUDIO AUDIENCE *applauds*. Cannon dismounts, hits his Mark, and live Orchestra plays the number-one pop-rock white duo's organ-heavy R&B of the 1980's. Cannon *snaps* his fingers and gyrates hips to rival *Elvis* while singing.

Beau stops cleaning-up hypnotized by Cannon's Indian-cobra.

TV INSERT: Cannon sings the song's chorus.

CANNON (FILTERED)

"Yeah, I-I-I, I'll do almost
anything, that you want me to.
Yeah, but I can't go for that,
Nooo, no, no can do, I can't go for
that ..."

STUDIO FEMALES (FILTERED)

Eeeeeeeeeee --!

Their *screams* and Cannon's singing fades in Beau's ears as his eyes go glassy. He's in love, for the very first time.

INT. DIAMOND'S HOUSE - NEXT MORNING

Polite *knock* on door. No response. Firmer *knock* on door. No response. Door knob turns then opens slow. Becky enters apprehensive wearing jeans and a hoodie.

BECKY

Hello?

No response. Becky looks to check the house number on door frame with note in her hand then enters. She closes door to stand with hands on hips. *Music* is barely heard coming from downstairs. She pockets her note and follows it.

INT. DIAMOND'S BASEMENT - MOMENTS LATER

Marijuana and Cocaine are on a glass table. Strewn around the floor are bodies in various forms of disrobe. Ace Dancers with Auntie's Strippers lie like corpses in matched-pairs.

Diamond has Texas and Country each asleep on her "after-market" breasts. Mercedes sleeps on Joshua's breathing chest. *Caligula* had nothing on this scene.

Becky is furious as she *smashes* something on the floor.

Aunties sleeping-beauties stir. Ace's sleeping-beauts *belch*.

DIAMOND

What the --?

Becky kicks the bottom of Joshua's foot, hard.

JOSHUA

Ow! Who da --?!

Joshua's vision clears, he sees Becky, and jumps up fast letting Mercedes' head hit the floor. *Thump*. He regrets both decisions as he holds his head in pain.

JOSHUA

Beck --? Ow!

BECKY

How could YOU!

(*stomps* a foot)

Bring my daughter into this din of inequity!

Diamond stirs as Texas and Country "plump" her pillows.

DIAMOND

Den a' who?

TEXAS

Who's the bible-thumper?

COUNTRY

Yeah, tell her to stop thumpin'.

JOSHUA

Uhhhh --? Hey everyone! This is my
wife, Becky!

Half-hearted hands go up around the room waving, *Shhhhh*.

BECKY

EX! Wife! Where's my daughter?!

JOSHUA

"Our" daughter.

Becky kicks Joshua in his balls, hard. He doubles-over, then
falls over in slow motion.

ACE Dancers instinctively cover their own in their sleep.

BECKY

If you ever want to have more --!

Becky draws back same foot. Joshua pulls into fetal position.

Mercedes jumps up in front to protect him.

MERCEDES

Hold on there, Reggie! Go kick
someone else's dome.

Becky points at Mercedes' shoulder-tattoo.

BECKY

Nice stamp, tramp! Where's my ...?!

Becky grabs Mercedes throat in a Ranger Chokehold. Mercedes
brings her hands together and down across Becky's wrists
breaking her hold then front-push snap-kicks Becky in the
chest knocking Becky across the room.

Becky stands rubbing her sore bosom then grabs two empty beer
bottles and smashes the bottoms together *breaking* them.

BECKY

Bitch!

MERCEDES

Ex-Bitch!

Mercedes drops back into a Martial Arts High-Horse stance then swishes-open a stainless-steel Butterfly knife.

ACE Dancers sit up in awake-interest to munch on snacks.

DIAMOND

Not in my house, bitchettes!

(to Becky)

Upstairs in my bedroom, asleep.

Becky drops her bottles, spits at Mercedes's feet, then runs up the stairs. Joshua takes off after her.

Mercedes swishes her knife closed looking at Diamond.

MERCEDES

Men.

INT. DIAMOND'S SECOND FLOOR - MOMENTS LATER

Becky runs up the second-flight stairs to turn door-knobs then kicks open their doors police-style. Last one won't turn, she leans to listen, and hears quiet *sobbing* inside.

BECKY

Kenny?

KENNY

(sobbing stops)

Mommy?

Becky tries door-knob, it's locked. Sound of latch turning and door opens. Kenny, dressed same, face now tear-stained, rushes to hug Becky's waist who strokes her hair.

BECKY

Why did you lock the door, honey?

KENNY

Their noise. I was afraid.

Joshua walks down the hall. Becky backhands him sending him flying. Becky scoops up Kenny in her arms and exits running down the stairs. Joshua comes up on an elbow cupping one eye.

INT. JOSHUA'S GARAGE - NEXT WEEK

Joshua works laying under a car on his creeper again.

Linden works standing under a car up on a lift.

LINDEN

Warned ya.

Joshua rolls out from under the car coming up on an elbow like before but now with a rainbow black-eye.

LINDEN

They don't call my mom "Diamond in the rough" for nuthin'.

PROCESS SERVER

Joshua "The Mechanic" Thibodeaux?

Joshua looks up to see a PROCESS SERVER, African-American male, 20s, fit, in a cheap suit. Joshua nods wary.

PROCESS SERVER

Father of Kendra Thibodeaux?

JOSHUA

Just, Kenny.

Process Server floats a subpoena down to Joshua who catches.

PROCESS SERVER

You've been served.

Process Server *18th Century* bows then exits fast.

Joshua opens his subpoena and reads then crumples up angry.

LINDEN

That's why I didn't go. I love my mom but she's always in trouble with The Law.

(goes back to work)

'Course, that also means, she's in good, with some bad lawyers.

JOSHUA

Any of them work for "special needs" discount?

Linden glares at Joshua "Hey!" then tilts his head thinking.

INT. NASHVILLE'S FAMILY COURT - DAY - THE FOLLOWING WEEK

Looks more like a business suite than a courtroom with modern office tables and desk chairs.

Main door opens and Becky enters followed by her ATTORNEY, young, clean-cut, wearing an expensive suit. Both sit at a table.

Joshua with his LAWYER, older, unshaven, wearing a cheap suit, enter and sit at the second table.

Becky leans over to Joshua thumb-pointing to her Attorney.

BECKY
You're paying for him.

FEMALE BAILIFF, in Sheriff's uniform, enters from side door.

FEMALE BAILIFF
All Rise!

Everyone is already standing as a FEMALE JUDGE, 40s, in judicial robe, enters from side door and sits behind bench.

FEMALE BAILIFF
Hear ye, hear ye, we are gathered
here today in the case of Rebecca
Thibodeaux versus The Mechanic ...

JOSHUA'S LAWYER
Joshua!

Joshua glares at Becky who smiles mischievous.

FEMALE BAILIFF
Versus Joshua Thibodeaux for sole
custody of their daughter, Kendra
Thibodeaux. Be seated.

All sit except Becky's Attorney.

ATTORNEY
Your Honor, said motion is brought
before the court under Tennessee
code, Title 36, wherein family
courts have the authority to award
the "care, custody, and control" of
the children to either parent.

Attorney sits. Lawyer stands.

LAWYER
Yer Hona', under 36, 6, 101, the
court shall have the widest
discretion possible to order a
custody arrangement that is in the
best interest of the child to
"both" parents.

Attorney stands.

ATTORNEY

Except as provided in subdivision,
a, 2, A, where the court finds by
clear and convincing evidence to
the contrary, your Honor.

Attorney sits. Lawyer goes to stand but Female Judge holds up
a hand "Stop" so he resits.

FEMALE JUDGE

Thank you both for playing together
so nice. But before I have a teeter-
totter brought in, what evidence is
in question?

ATTORNEY

(stands, adjusts coat)
Your Honor, a material change of
circumstance for purposes of
modification of a residential
parenting schedule may include
significant changes in the other
parent's working conditions so as
to significantly affect their
parenting ability.

Lawyer jumps up so outraged as to spit during his rebuttal.

LAWYER

Uuuuweeee, yer Hona'! Can I gets all
that in Brail?!

Female Judge looks down at her desk to hide her smile.

LAWYER

My estrogen-esteemed colleague's
comment is so over-the-top
outrageous as to remind us why
blind men don't skydive.

Female Judge looks up fast and delivers its punch-line.

FEMALE JUDGE

Scares the crap out of their dog.

Lawyer smiles hooking both thumbs under his suspenders.

LAWYER

Exactly, ya Hona'.

Attorney's face explodes into crimson as he loses his Ive-
league trained-voice to revert to his back-woods upbringing.

ATTORNEY

I intends ta' proooove ...!

FEMALE JUDGE

Enough!

Female Judge indicates "*Sit!*" Both Counselors do.

FEMALE JUDGE

Because the Defendant is not being charged with abandonment or abuse, I hereby order an investigation by Child Services during which only supervised visitation is allowed by the Defendant until at such time said investigation is concluded and this case is reconvened.

Female Judge *smacks* her gavel and stands.

FEMALE BAILIFF

All Rise!

ALL stand.

Female Judge exits side-door. Female Bailiff follows.

Becky and her Attorney exit main door.

Joshua sits down stunned. Lawyer sits beside and pats Joshua's knee telling a simile joke.

LAWYER

Tennessee Trooper pulls over an outta-state elderly couple for speeding. He looks at the old man's license and exclaims, "Texas?! I dated a girl from there once. Ugggg-lee." The old woman yells, "What'd he say?!" Old man answers, "Said he knows ya."

Joshua has to *chuckle* shaking his head.

INT. AUNTIE'S STRIP CLUB - THAT NIGHT

Joshua sits at the bar sullen watching a New Stripper finish her routine on the pole. He feels his ears burning and turns to Mercedes behind the bar. She is staring at him. He points at her then makes a fist and beats it on his heart smiling most charming. She chagrins back as only a smitten woman can.

AUNTIE'S NEW AUDIENCE is now exactly even between LADIES and GENTLEMEN of now a more upper class crowd who *clap* politely then tip the New Stripper as she works their tables.

Diamond steps on stage wearing a trailing chiffon nightgown.

DIAMOND

And now, folks, straight from his
television debut, heeerrree's --.

Auntie's New Audience drowns her out with their *clapping*.

Stage lights go off, Cannon's same-costume LED lights come on highlighting his aurora. Stage lights come on backlighting his silhouette *snapping* his fingers to same *Star Search* song.

Everyone in the bar goes deaf from the din of *screams*.

Sitting in the back shadows is Beau who leans forward on his table, head in hands, *sighing* dreamy-eyed. Time fades.

Auntie's New Audience gropes Cannon as he walks through them *singing* and garnering record tips. He stops at Beau's table.

Beau, still in his dream-state pose, stares oblivious. Cannon *snaps* fingers in from of Beau's eyes to snap-out-of-it. Beau joins-in singing same song. He also has a beautiful voice.

BEAU

"I-I-I-I'll do almost anything,
that you want me to-uuuuu --."

Sledge offers his hand. Beau puts one hand on his chest then offers his other. Sledge pulls him up singing song's Chorus.

CANNON

"Where does it stop, Where do you
dare me, To draw the line?"

BEAU

"You've got the body, Now you want
my soul?

(wags a finger)

"Don't even think about it, Say no
go."

Cannon begins hip-bumping Beau who joins-in smiling huge.

CANNON/BEAU

"Can't go for that, Can't go for
that, Can't go for that --"

Cannon twirls Beau twice and finishes bowing. Music *ends*.

Old Stripper takes stage to no applause. New music *plays*.

BEAU
I want you!

CANNON
Say again?

Beau is embarrassed and pulls out his earlier camera.

BEAU
Your picture! Uh, I "want" --to
take your picture.

CANNON
Oh, uh, sure. Come backstage later.

Cannon *clucks* his tongue to snap-finger gun-point at Beau then swaggers into the back.

TWENTIES-SOMETHING, a New Audience female, follows Cannon.

INT./EXT. AUNTIE'S DRESSING ROOM - MOMENTS LATER

Beau almost pinches himself as he makes sure his camera is working right. Satisfied, he takes a deep breath, *exhales*, forms a dentist-perfect smile, and opens dressing room door.

Cannon is standing hands-on-hips facing the door. Twenties-Something is on her knees with her back to the door. Her head is up-and-down on Cannon's "thing" as only a young thang can.

Beau can guess what she is doing but is devastated none the less and indicates "*Later*" closing the door.

Cannon *clucks* his tongue as he finger-gun "shoots" at Beau.

Beau leans against the closed-door and begins *whimpering* then almost like sleep-walking stumbles into next-door bathroom.

INT. AUNTIES BATHROOM - MOMENTS LATER

Beau enters its Men's Room door that *squeaks* bad. He's *crying*. He goes into a bathroom stall and throws its lock.

INT. BEAU'S STALL - CONTINUOUS

He stands motionless then begins *slapping* his face hard.

Bathroom entrance door *squeaks* horrible again. Beau freezes then stands on the toilet bowl's lid and hunches down.

Giddy-laughter between TWO MEN. ONE UNKNOWN MAN speaks.

UNKNOWN MAN

Let me check.

Unknown Man tries different stall's doors. They all open.

Unknown Man gets to Beau's door and pushes. It's locked. Beau is petrified. Unknown man *giggles*.

UNKNOWN MAN

Stopppppp.

Sound of Unknown Man getting on his knees and trying to look under Beau's door. Beau didn't know he could shrink so small.

UNKNOWN MAN

What? In here?! Silly boy, tricks are for kids.

Sound of the Two Men entering the stall beside Beau's. A belt buckle releases then *clinks* falling onto the floor.

Beau can't quite make out the sucking sound then recognizes it and goes bug-eyed covering his mouth with both hands.

HAUSER

Good job, boy. Sensational.

Beau is having a heart attack then panic attack then fight-or-flight syndrome, all at once, without physically moving.

HAUSER

Spank me while you do that.

Beau loses brain-cells, almost swoons, then The Devil appears on one shoulder and he examines his camera. He adjusts its *Flash Selector* knob then sets its *Film Advance* selector to automatic. He quietly unlocks his door then raises his camera lens up high to the sound of Hauser's chubby-cheeks *slapped*.

HAUSER'S STALL-WALL INSERT: Beau's camera lens peeks up over its divider then sound of its shutter-lens *clicking* as the motor advances its film furiously.

HAUSER

What the --?!

Beau bee-lines it just like the *Road Runner* cartoon to exit.

HAUSER

Don't know? Some perv. My assistant will track him down. Don't stop now, son! --Good, boy.

INT. HAUSER'S OFFICE - NEXT DAY

Hauser, always in same suit, sits behind his desk smoking a new cigar. He leans forward to press on his desk's intercom.

HAUSER

Hold all calls, no interruptions.

Beau, in a new different suit than his boss, sits on the other side of the desk with an inquisitive but innocent face.

HAUSER

Gots a delicate matter that needs your help, son.

BEAU

Don't call me, "son."

HAUSER

Excuse me?

BEAU

No, don't think I will.

HAUSER

Excuse you?

BEAU

Yes, believe I finally can do that.
Do you like Patrick Swayze?

HAUSER

Do I, what? Who?

BEAU

(quotes Swayze)
"Imagine me as a kid, growing up in
redneck Texas with ballet shoes,
tucking a violin under my arm. I
had to fight my way up."
(dry spits to side)
Just to wind up here --with you.

HAUSER

Taken leave a' your senses, boy?

BEAU

Actually, for the first time in my
life, I am being --most sensible.

Beau tosses a sealed manilla envelope onto Hauser's desk.

HAUSER

What's that?

BEAU
You're worst fears.

Hauser "feels" size and contents of envelope. It's pictures.

HAUSER
You?!

BEAU
"You" do remember I'm an amateur
photographer. Don't you?
(no response)
You will now. Because now, I want
to go professional.

Hauser slides the envelope into an open desk drawer, closes
drawer, then leans back blowing smoke rings.

HAUSER
Well lookee who done decided to sit
down at the big boy's table.

Beau reaches over and takes a cigar out of Hauser's humidor,
rolls it between his fingers near an ear, then wets its end.

Hauser slides over his cigar-guillotine.

BEAU
Real men --.

Beau bites off the end of his cigar to spit into a hand.

BEAU
Bite it off.

Hauser's eyebrow goes up as he slides over a gold lighter.

HAUSER
Terms?

Beau takes a long wooden cigar-match out of the humidor and
flicks its tip with his thumbnail igniting it.

BEAU
The "foot" should preferably be
toasted using a long wooden match.

Beau holds his cigar's end at a 45-degree angle three inches
over match's flame rotating it until the tip begins to burn.

BEAU
Observe how its outside wrapper and
binder have a white ashen aspect.

Beau puts his bitten-end in his mouth talking around it.

BEAU

Now, you ignite the filler.

Beau draws without inhaling holding the match to its tip while rotating the cigar. A surge of flame shoots up then a puff of smoke escapes his lips. He smiles satisfied.

HAUSER

I knows all that?

BEAU

Ahhhh, but since you spent more money on your pick-up truck than your education, you've never used "all that" knowledge.

HAUSER

What do you want?

BEAU

What all boys want from their oppressive fathers. Freedom.

Beau slides over an official-looking memo.

Hauser reads it silent then reacts "WTF?!"

HAUSER

Always knew you were more than a tad touched, but you're plain outta' your mind if you think ...?

Beau pulls out an identical envelope to his earlier one.

Hauser's face turns crimson then he signs the memo furious.

Beau takes the memo, trifoldes it, seals it inside a regular envelope, and puts this one in his lapel's pocket *patting* it.

HAUSER

Guarantee?

BEAU

You, are in complete charge of everything that happens to you. I have no desire to cross your path again unless you break our covenant.

Beau blows three smoke rings that interlock.

BEAU (CONT'D)

And since this is my last day
working here, I'll wait for your
sterling letter of recommendation.

Beau leans back confident and fully in charge of his destiny
for the first time in his life.

INT. LANCELOT'S OFFICE - LATER THAT DAY

Throne room of a wanna-be *Valiant* of cheap Spanish furniture.

Lancelot sits behind his opulent desk looking at the ceiling.

Single *knuckle-knock* on door then it opens. Beau, now dressed
in a leisure-suit with matching long ascot, enters glowing.

BEAU

Do you have a moment for a great
business proposition?

(no response)

I want to be your Men of Ace's
official photographer.

(no response)

Think of it, a calendar with each
of your dancers featured monthly,
with Cool-Aid as April's fool. And
of course, a group Christmas pose.

(no response)

Like L.A.'s "Blueboy" it'll take
Nashville by storm. Annnnnd --.

Beau holds up his drawing of the back of a satin-black jacket
with "M.O.A." printed in gold where the "o" is the Male sex
symbol. Except its arrow points to the left, not right.

LANCELOT

(*slams* fist on desk)

YES!

BEAU

Thank you for giving me the chance,
sir! You won't regret it!

Beau exits primed by a newer proud papa he never had.

Lancelot *groans* then pushes his chair away from the desk.

Cannon crawls out from underneath it wiping the back of a
hand across his lips.

Lancelot hands him a small stack of money.

Cannon fans the money's edge near an ear "counting" then *clucks* his tongue to finger-snap gun-point and exits.

Lancelot wipes his brow with his suit's silk handkerchief.

LANCELOT
Calendar? What "calendar?"

INT. NASHVILLE COURTHOUSE COUNCIL CHAMBER - WEEKS LATER

Chaotic chaos as Council Members argue among themselves.

Hauser sits silent and blotchy-faced behind his Dias.

COUNCILMAN, who could be actor *Burl Ives* twin, in a tweed suit, waves the ACE's just-released calendar in the air.

COUNCILMAN
What in Zeus's thunderation are you
doing about this?!

Councilman opens his calendar like a centerfold magazine.

CALENDAR INSERT: For the month of April, Cool-Aid, dressed only in yellow fireman suspender-pants, is being "rained on" by male models in thongs, standing on step-ladders.

Anarchy breaks out. Hauser holds up an Air Horn and presses for its blaring painful *Screees*. All Council Members freeze.

HAUSER
First Amendment, gentlemen.

COUNCILMAN
Don't get you nowadays, Housy?
You've changed and the way you
backed off going after these
deviants? What's wrong with you,
son?

HAUSER
Don't call me, son.

COUNCILMAN
'Scuse me?

HAUSER
Don't think I will. Matta' a' fact,
don't think I'll excuse me neither.
Boys, there comes a time in every
man's life, when he has to do wants
he needs to do, check that, what he
has the balls to do!

All Council Members stare as lost Lemmings.

COUNCILMAN

Long as "he" don't get caught!

Guffawing and *belly-laughing* flow like a political tsunami.

INT./EXT. M.O.A. VARIOUS EVENTS MONTAGE - DAY AND NIGHT

Men of Aces are at their peak of social demand. They wear the new MOA satin jackets proudly everywhere and are stopped on the street for autographs. They dance at other clubs, in hotel ballrooms, private parties, and of course, at Aunties.

They are the topic of gossip, town magazine articles, and local television news. Nashville's newcomers reign supreme.

And wherever they go, drugs, alcohol, and cross-dressing debauchery, follow them in excess. Even wasted, Joshua still scans the crowds for signs of a social worker spying on him. You're not really paranoid if you really are being followed.

INT. ACE OF SPADES DRESSING ROOM - NIGHT - WEEKS LATER

Dancers are getting ready as usual. All look thinner with bags under their eyes from partying too, too much.

Detroit has a walk-up service set-up on an antique silver cosmetics brass-framed mirror. Eight lines of Cocaine lie evenly spaced out on mirror with a thin straw resting below them. One by one, a Dancer pays, then uses straw to *snort*.

TEXAS

You got it?

DETROIT

I got it. When I "get it."

TEXAS

You'll get it, after closing.

DETROIT

Promise, with a cherry on top?

Texas glares. Detroit tosses him a vial of liquid steroid.

COUNTRY

Gonna' have to start calling you,
Doctor Detroit.

Detroit becomes the used car salesman he should be.

DETROIT

Step right up to Ole Doc! Yes sir,
if I don't have it, I can get it!

Aretha has his own fix-it cosmetic tray set up to do all the
Dancer's eye make-up. Quite an assembly line, first a Dancer
snorts coke then gets concealer, mascara, and eye-liner.

Joshua sits by himself with his head down.

SLEDGE

So how's it going, slugger?

JOSHUA

I think --.
(looks up sad)
I'm gonna' lose my daughter.

SLEDGE

Man, if it weren't for my kids --.

JOSHUA

This is killing me. How'd you make
it through four divorces?

SLEDGE

Who said I'm divorced?

The Other Dancers do double-takes then listen in.

JOSHUA

But you said you had four wives?

SLEDGE

No. I said, I have five kids.
"They" have four moms.

Texas releases band around his arm and puts away his "kit".

TEXAS

That's pretty f'n irresponsible.

SLEDGE

(as De Niro in *Taxi*)
"You talkin' to me? You talkin' to
me?!"

TEXAS

See any other dead-beats in here?

SLEDGE

I do whatever it takes to put food
on the table and clothes on their
back, mesomorph-man.

Sledge stands with fists. Texas stands and flexes.

SLEDGE

Who the f you taking care of,
beside your own muscle mass?

Joshua stands up between them.

JOSHUA

Back-off, guys. I'm the only one
who feels like hitting someone.

TEXAS

Yeah? Well, just try it!

JOSHUA

What? No. What I meant is ...

Joshua holds his hands up too fast. Texas thinks he's throwing a punch and throws his own first. His fist connects with Joshua's eye screwing The Mechanic down to the floor.

Sledge throws a left-hook hitting Texas in the jaw. No reaction. Sledge looks at his left fist "WTF?" Texas smiles and swings a haymaker. Sledge ducks then tackles him. They wrestle down onto the floor.

Aretha high-pitched screams to jump on her chair cowering.

ACE

Knock It Off!

Ace tries to break them up but gets hit then dives on the back of Texas locking-in a *Rear Naked Choke* leg-scissoring around his waist. It takes the rest of the Dancers to pull Sledge off. Texas fights until he passes out. Ace pops up and takes his belt to tie Texas' hands behind his back.

ACE

I was afraid of this.

SLEDGE

I ain't afraid a nobody!

ACE

Shut up, stupid. I'm talking about
"roid-rage!" I've seen it too many
times at my M.M.A. gym.

(speaks as father-figure)

The rest of you fuck-ups are always
too fucked up to see that you're
fucking up yourselves! You need to
slow down and enjoy life! A plant-
based diet is what you --?

Ace looks confused. He stutters.

ACE
Uh--? Plant-based --?

SLEDGE
You okay, Ace?

Ace faints forward. Sledge dives to catch him.

Joshua stands. Aretha girlie-screams high-pitched enough to break glass while pointing at Joshua.

ARETHA
Eeeeeee!

All look, Joshua's eye is swollen and distorted making his face look like half a halloween mask.

Aretha faints. Detroit catches her then drops her on Texas.

Tiny enters carrying an armful of new costumes.

TINY
Wait till you see what ...

Joshua turns to Tiny who faints falling onto his costumes.

JOSHUA
What?

Joshua looks in the wall mirror and now he screams.

JOSHUA
Oh, My, Godddd!

Lancelot enters.

LANCELOT
Goodness gracious, girls! Sounds like a kitty convention in here.

Lancelot sees Texas on the floor, now conscious trying to get his hands free. Then he sees Aretha coming-to at the feet of Detroit. Next he sees Sledge laying Ace on the floor to administer CPR. Then Tiny coming-to on his costumes. Joshua turns and points to his injured eye. Lancelot faints. No one moves to catch him but that's okay, he falls on top of Tiny. Satin walks in with her baseball-bat to see Ace's Armageddon.

SATIN
Life throws curveballs, but I was born ready to duck, tuck, and roll.

Satin clears her throat then becomes a Drill Instructor.

SATIN (CONT'D)

Sledge, continue CPR. Freebird, go
call an ambulance. Country, carry
hubby up to the Office. Cannon, get
behind the bar before we get robbed
even more. Tiny, tell Cool-Aid
what's happening and to stay
frosty. Detroit, get up on the
stage and tell jokes, recite
poetry, wax philosophic, anything.

Her raw recruits just stand there.

SATIN

Move It, Move It, Move It!

Her soldiers expedite. She raises her bat over Texas.

SATIN

And you gorgeous, just lay there
lookin' steroid-stupid until I
figure this all out. Now, who do I
have left to dance?

Joshua looks at Satin who steps back with hand-on-chest.

SATIN

Lord have mercy! You can't go out
there looking like that!

Joshua pulls a long black silk scarf out of Tiny's costume-
pile and hands it to Satin.

SATIN

Darlin', now is not the time ...

JOSHUA

Just do it.

INT. ACE OF SPADES - MOMENTS LATER

Satin steps onto the stage. Cool-Aid stops his record.

TWO EMTs in uniform pull an empty stretcher past the stage
into the dressing room.

FIFTH CROWD, the highest high-rollers yet, point and gossip.

SATIN

Folks, we had a little accident
backstage, nothing to worry about.

Satin primps her wig then lifts her bosom back into place.

SATIN (CONT'D)

But now, we have yet another first
here at Ace of Spades.

(clears throat nervous)

Doing something none of you have
seen here, or for all I know, any
where in this strange strange
world. Please welcome our very own
and very special ...!

Two EMTs now pull the unconscious Ace strapped onto their
stretcher wearing an oxygen mask past Satin to exit the club.

SATIN

MASKED MECHANIC!

Sitting at a back corner table is Becky, in jeans and t-shirt
with her Attorney in same suit and now a SOCIAL WORKER, 20s,
hair in a bun, glasses, wearing a K-Mart women's suit.

Becky nudges Social Worker.

BECKY

See, see? I told you! Doesn't this
prove it?

Social Worker adjusts her glasses getting out a legal pad.

House lights go out. They come back on and Joshua stands near
the pole now wearing the silk scarf as a trailing blindfold.

Cool-Aid plays a famous Bohemian rhapsody. Joshua grabs pole.

JOSHUA'S SOLO: Joshua brings true joy to all who watch that
night with glowing grace, effortless flow, and charismatic
sexy movement that rivals *Mikhail Baryshnikov's* best ballet.
On music's end, Joshua slithers up around the pole like a
snake, coils, then releases to do the club's first triple
backwards somersault to stick his standing-landing perfect.

Time stands still for everyone to absorb the beauty of a once-
in-a-lifetime experience then their emotions explode into
enthusiastic *applause* that escalates.

Joshua yoga-style folds himself down into just a small hump
on the stage. All the lights go out.

Like a Starter's Pistol just went off, Fifth Crowd jumps to a
screaming standing ovation. (*all true*)

The Three at Becky's table remain sitting silent. Social
Worker takes off her glasses and turns to Becky.

SOCIAL WORKER

You never said --he was an artist.

She jumps up joining in the salutations speaking in French.

SOCIAL WORKER

Encore, Encore! Je vous en prie!

Becky looks at Attorney who shrugs his head nodding. Both stand and add their *claps* to the club's escalating din.

Within his turtle-shell of a man, Joshua smiles at peace. He now knows what he's going to do with the rest of his life.

INT. EARLIER FAMILY COURT - DAYS LATER

Joshua, wearing a suit with matching eye-patch cloth, sits at the Defense Table next to his same Lawyer.

Becky, wearing a suit with matching faux-pearls, sits at Prosecution Table next to her Attorney in a new three-piece.

Sitting in a back pew is Social Worker, dressed same, but now with a permanent smile, especially when glancing at Joshua.

Female Bailiff enters from side-door.

FEMALE BAILIFF

All rise.

All do. Female Judge enters from same door and sits.

FEMALE BAILIFF

Be ...

FEMALE JUDGE

Stop!

Female Bailiff looks back at Judge "*Excuse me?*"

FEMALE JUDGE

I read the Social Worker's report recommending further study. So why this sudden Emergency Hearing?

Joshua looks panic-stricken at his Lawyer.

ATTORNEY

Your Honor, my client needs more...

BECKY

Stop!

Becky looks at Joshua, purses her lips in thought, decides, and nods her head at Female Judge becoming a Brooklynite.

BECKY
Fogetaboutit.

JOSHUA
Excuse me?

Female Judge raises her gavel then uses her *Sixth Sense* after six years on the bench to let human nature take over.

BECKY
Yes, as a matter of fact, I do.

Becky smiles at Joshua. Social Worker sits up straight.

BECKY
Based on how brilliantly you dance,
especially blindfolded.

JOSHUA
You were there?

ATTORNEY
We all were.

Attorney points back to Social Worker. Joshua turns to look at her and smiles making her entire day oh so much brighter.

Female Judge looks at Social Worker's response, then down at Social Workers file, and nods in understanding.

BECKY
I know you could not have danced so
beautifully, unless you already had
--a beautiful soul.

Female Judge, Female Bailiff, and Social Worker all hold the same exact "Awww" look.

BECKY
So if its alright with you, your
Honor, let's just forget the whole
damn thing. If that's doable?

FEMALE JUDGE
Damn doable. Case dismissed!
(*strikes gavel hard*)
Now get the hell out of my
courtroom.

Social Worker *fast-claps* happy like a rock-groupie.

Lawyer and Attorney shake then Attorney wipes off same hand with his handkerchief. Joshua and Becky shake then release.

JOSHUA

Thank you.

BECKY

"Thank you" for letting me see,
your feminine side.

(thumbs to her Attorney)
You're still paying for him.

Joshua *pecks* Becky on the cheek. Social Worker sours.

INT. DIAMOND'S DINING ROOM - NOW THANKSGIVING DAY

Table is set for four with a paper Thanksgiving Turkey decoration in the middle of various bowls of side dishes.

Laughter in kitchen, then Joshua, Lindon, Mercedes, and Diamond carrying a dressed turkey, enter. Linden removes the turkey decoration and Diamond replaces it with her real one.

Lindon pulls out Diamond's chair and Mercedes pulls out her own but Joshua stops her to finish pulling it out. All sit.

DIAMOND

Please bow your heads.

Lindon and Mercedes look at each other surprised. All bow.

DIAMOND

Dear, Lord --thanks.

Diamond begins carving her turkey. The Others are surprised.

DIAMOND

She don't care how long you say it.
Just as long as you mean it when
you say it.

All Four begin the American Dream of a family Thanksgiving Dinner as Mercedes and Joshua steal side-glances at each other. They are, for all the world to see, truly in love.

INT. ACE OF SPADES DRESSING ROOM - NOW CHRISTMAS EVE

Dressing room is decorated with Christmas Lights and cards.

Texas and Ace are absent as Dancers get ready for their first Christmas Show with costumes that are all different themes.

But all Dancers are now worn down by constant excesses of drugs, booze, and equal-opportunity sex. All Dancers look and act different, sluggish, almost sad. Physically, they move slower with less vigor. Mentally, they've lost the passion for what they do. It's not just a job, it's just a paycheck.

SLEDGE

Too bad Texas moved back home. I'll miss that muscle-bound maggot.

DETROIT

I won't. Now we can all make some serious shorty-two-forty money.

FREEBIRD

Right on, brother. My new Vette is vetting me back to the poor house.

ARETHA

How was your day off, Joshua? Get to spend time with your daughter?

JOSHUA

Now that alimony come in regular, the Ex backed off her rhetorical rhetoric. She lets me see Kenny whenever I want. So yeah, pretty darn good time. Thanks for askin'.

COUNTRY

Hey? Somebody said somethin' about seeing Ace talking to Lancelot?

Ace enters with his gym bag looking fit and healthy again.

ACE

Merry Christmas, heathen!

All Dancers rush to congratulate Ace and welcome him back.

JOSHUA

Dose traiteurs, dey cure you?

COUNTRY

How "dey" do dat, after a heart attackee?

ACE

Wasn't, so they did. Turns out I have a slight arrhythmia.

ARETHA

"Slight?!" Honey, that's an abnormal heart-rhythm. I know --.

Aretha fans her face with both hands almost taking off.

ARETHA (CONT'D)

I'm having one right now.

ACE

Yes, it's electrical. But no, not
life threatening. Just bothersome.
So I have to self-monitor. So --?

(claps hands)

We all ready to go slay our belles?

OTHER DANCERS

(unenthusiastic responses)

Yeah ...Sure ...Guess, etc.

ACE

What the fuck was that? I could get
more excitement out of snapping two
wet towels together. Our lobby's
packed, I'm back, and it's fuckin'
Christmas Eve! So let me hear it!

All Dancers look at each other. This is what they've been
missing. Ace is and always was their lifeboat and anchor.

JOSHUA

Yeah!

(jumps to standing)

Fuck, Yeah!

SLEDGE

God Damn right it's Christmas!

(hits fist into palm)

Ace is back and I'm all in!

Freebird looks at his limp-dick costume then kicks it away.

FREEBIRD

Fuck this Currier and Ives
bullshit!

(pulls out chains costume)

Freebird is in the house! Yeah,
baby!

DETROIT

So let's do some Christmas blow
then go do our Christmas show!

Dancers begin to line-up as automatons at Detroit's mirror.

ACE

Freeze, you mother-suckering
asshole God Damn dope-heads!

Dancers act hurt, except Detroit whose eyes become slits.

ACE (CONT'D)

Stress was the reason I had my
"event." Stress from worrying about
you piss-ants killing yourselves.
But I kept my mouth shut thinking
it weren't none of my business.
Well fuck that shit! All this --.
(waves hands around)
Is my business. Show, Business.

Ace rips the wall-mirror off to hold it out showing them.

ACE

Look at yourself! I mean, really
look in here at your "inner" self.

Dancers do. They don't like what they see, except one.

DETROIT

I look guuuud.

ACE

But you act bad! I care about each
and every one of you, including you
Dee-T. But your shit has to go! No?

DETROIT

No! Done already told you, I got
one mother, and I don't like her
neither! So step, the fuck, off.

Detroit stands as The Devil. Ace squares off as Archangel.
Today is their battle for the Dancers souls. Judgement Day.

ACE

Didn't want it to come down to this
boys, but --.
(exhales to relax)
Either his drugs go, or I go.

One by one, all Dancers, except Detroit, stand behind Ace.

DETROIT

Told you Day One, you need my shit
to keep doin' your shit. So if my
dope goes, so goes my dope-ass.

Detroit packs up his drugs and personal items angry.

JOSHUA

Doesn't have to be this way, Dee-T.

DETROIT

Man, get your white head outta' my
black ass and look around at the
real world I lives in. This --.

(shakes Doctor's bag)

Is as real as I let it get.

ACE

Life's all about choices, man.

DETROIT

Yeah? Well then I choose to go live
my life my way, Whitey.

Detroit goes to exit but bumps into Lancelot entering.

LANCELOT

Excuse me. Oh, great timing, you're
up!

DETROIT

Up yours, pale-face. I quit!

Detroit storms out. Lancelot is quite beside himself.

LANCELOT

Well that was rude.
(shocked epiphany)
Wait? Is he serious?!

ACE

As my heart-attack. I just told
everyone, no more drugs. No more.

SLEDGE

But alcohol? That's okay, right?

ACE

In moderation.

Lancelot wipes his brow with ascot.

LANCELOT

Guess I'll have to go hire another
Negro.

Aretha loses all pretense of femininity as her voice drops.

ARETHA

"Black, Man!" Say it, Cracker!

LANCELOT

Blackman?

ACE

Hands!

Dancers put one hand on top of his then all look to Lancelot who puts his in. Hands go up and down twice then break up.

ALL

ACES!

Ace hangs the Santa beard on Lancelot then puts the Santa hat on him, too.

ACE

Okay Jolly Saint Dick. Go tell
Mister Cool to play some "cool"
Christmas rock. M.O.A. is gonna'
rock this House!

Dressing room becomes an NFL locker room on *Super Bowl*. The *slapping* of bare asses makes Lancelot wipe his brow with his fake-beard before exiting. Dancers dress in regular costumes then exit to accolades and *cat-calls* from CHRISTMAS CROWD.

Christmas Crowd's chant echoes in the empty dressing room.

CHRISTMAS CROWD (O.S.)

A-ces, A-ces, A-CES, A-CES!

INT. ACE OF SPADES DRESSING ROOM - NOW NEW YEARS EVE

Their story has now come full circle as the dressing room is decorated with the "1990 Happy New Year" banner.

Seven Dancers and Ace enter in street clothes to begin undressing.

Lancelot enters followed by Kraken wearing his hoodie "up" to hide his braids with a garment bag slung over one shoulder.

LANCELOT

Gentle men, and lady, please let me
introduce our latest acquisition,
and your newest dance partner.

Lancelot bows sweeping a hand towards Kraken.

KRAKEN

Yo. Slang me --Kraken.

ARETHA

"Kraken?!" Can I see your monster?

Other Dancers *laugh* then side-wave welcoming Kraken.

LANCELOT

Actually picked him up hitchhiking
in Goodlettsville. He made me an
offer I simply couldn't refuse. Is
it okay if he goes first tonight?
You know, to warm up your crowd?

Other Dancers nod "*Sure.*" Lancelot fast-claps "*Goodie-goodie*"
and exits ever so pleased with himself.

Kraken hangs up his bag and takes off his hoodie to reveal
his super-long dreadlocks.

Other Dancers are in awe as Aretha falls in love, again.

RETURN TO.

EXT. ACE OF SPADES NEW YEARS EVE - AFTER KRAKEN'S ARREST

NYE Crowd dances in the street creating Nashville's first
Party Rave.

More police cruisers arrive with red lights and sirens on as
a SWAT van pulls up. SWAT OFFICERS, in full riot gear, begin
moving back Pedestrians. Police Officers begin rolling yellow
Do Not Cross tape around street poles blocking off streets.

Earlier Two Patrol Officers put the now hand-cuffed Kraken
into the back of an *MNPD* paddy-wagon then watch in awe as the
sheer might of their department arrives in full force.

All Dancers exit the club wearing their M.O.A. black satin
jackets and thongs with leather boots. Quite a sight even in
New Orleans, but in Nashville?

Lancelot, Satin, and Cool-Aid dressed as Father Time, exit
the club smiling and locking its front doors.

NEW POLICEMAN, in uniform, nail *Do Not Cross* yellow tape in a
big "X" across the club's entrance doors.

A van parks with "*Nashville Metro Department of Codes and
Building Safety*" painted on both sides. TWO CITY EMPLOYEES
wearing official coveralls exit van's front doors, open back
doors, and get out buckets of white swill with long-handled
brooms and rolled-up posters. They begin slathering posters
over all the club's exterior walls and entrance doors.

All Club Personnel gather around one poster to read it.

HAUSER

It say --.

All of Club Personnel spin to Hauser in same suit smoking same Stogie standing between Two Patrol Officers smiling.

HAUSER

You're all out of business. Show
Business that is.

A camera's flash multi-strobes temporarily blinding All.
Their eyes clear as Beau shows his neck-hanging "*Press Badge*"
to the Two Patrol Officers and steps in close to Hauser.

BEAU

Official photographer for "*The
Tennessean*" newspaper.

HAUSER

When did they start hirin' ...?

BEAU

Since 1907. Question, when did the
Planning Commission hold their
legally required Public Meeting?

HAUSER

(blows a smoke ring)
Thanksgiving Day.

BEAU

(writes on notepad)
Uh-huh. So when were the Council's
required-by-law *Three Readings*?

Houser smiles as only a true *Ebenezer Scrooge* can.

HAUSER

Merry Christmas.

BEAU

And when exactly did the Mayor sign
your Rezoning Bill?

HAUSER

Happiest New Year, boy! With all
necessary legal postings in public
newspapers, includin' yours.

BEAU

Let me guess, in their Obituaries
Column?

Hauser smiles sanctimonious then waves a hand forward. His
Two Patrol Officers move in to begin hand-cuffing all Club
Dancers who are speechless.

BEAU
What's the charge?

HAUSER
Indecent exposure.

Swat Officers move in to escort Dancers to more paddy-wagons.

Earlier *Eyewitness News* van parks as same Reporter and her Cameraman exit to begin filming.

Hauser waves a hand again and More Swat Officers begin pushing Reporter and Cameraman back to their van.

BEAU
These Dancers already changed our city and you can't change it back! I warned you what would happen if you did this.

HAUSER
Look around you, boy.

Beau looks. Nashville is under Hauser's Puritan siege.

HAUSER
Do you really think with this much power behind me, your well-used ass is any more of a press nuisance than a flea on my left nut?

Hauser waves hand again. New Police Officer hand-cuffs Beau.

BEAU
Charge?

HAUSER
Whatever I wants. I run this town.

INT. NASHVILLE'S NIGHT COURT - TOO EARLY NEXT MORNING

All Club Personnel sit in the Gallery with Beau, Reporter, and her Cameraman. Hauser stands to the side.

Male Bailiff enters, sees who is back again, and *groans*.

MALE BAILIFF
All Rise.

Same Male Judge enters, double-takes, then sits at Bench.

Same Proscecutor, in same suit, now more wrinkled, stands.

PROSCECUTOR

Yer Honor ...

MALE JUDGE

Charge?

HAUSER

Indecent expos ...

MALE JUDGE

How are you involved?

Beau steps forward with authority.

BEAU

He ramrodded a new Zoning Ordinance through Council without notifying Club Management of its existence then permanently closed their club.

MALE JUDGE

And they were arrested for that?

Beau holds up a micro-recorder and hits its *Play*-button.

BEAU (FILTERED)

"Charge?"

HAUSER (FILTERED)

"Whatever I wants. I run this town."

Beau clicks *Stop*-button. Hauser *Cheshire Cat* grins.

MALE JUDGE

Musta' missed your memo, your highness.

PROSCECUTOR

Yer Honor ...

MALE JUDGE

Save it. All Charges Dismissed!

(*strikes gavel*)

And Housy, you might wanna' start thinking about a new career because Public Service, ain't it.

Male Judge exits faster than Male Bailiff can react.

MALE BAILIFF

All Ri --?

(*raspberries*)

Go home.

Gallery stands. M.O.A. congratulate Beau. Cameraman turns on camera then light as Reporter interviews Lancelot and Satin.

Male Bailiff emits a *tongue-whistle* loud enough to stop traffic. Everyone freezes.

MALE BAILIFF

I said --Go, Home!

Everyone exits in a good mood.

ARETHA

Who wants pancakes?

All murmur agreement as doors close. Courtroom is quiet.

MALE BAILIFF

Pancakes? Nah, waffles and chicken.
Now were talkin'. --Hey, Judge!

Male Bailiff exits *whistling* turning out courtroom's lights.

INT - THE WAFFLE HOUSE - NOW NEW YEAR'S DAY

Everyone from Night Court including Male Bailiff now in street clothes are *laughing* finishing their breakfasts along with Diamond, Mercedes, Old Stripper, and New Stripper.

Freebird excuses himself.

JOSHUA

Where you goin'? We're all headin'
downtown. All da Honky Tonks are in
full swing by now.

FREEBIRD

New year, new day. And much too
beautiful a one not to enjoy it
with my new top down.

ACE

Hey man, it's been a long night.
Take a cab if you're going home.

Freebird exits, revs his Corvette, and *burns rubber* leaving.

ALL go back to paying checks when they hear an *explosion* down the road. Time stands still then an atomic bomb-like smoke-fireball rises above the trees.

Everyone exits running to get in their various cars and head toward the smoke.

EXT. STREET NEAR THE WAFFLE HOUSE - MOMENTS LATER

Everyone arrives to their worst fear. Engulfed in flames, his Corvette is hell on wheels and Freebird is not to be seen.

Male Bailiff gets on his radio and *calls* for back-up.

PAPERBOY, 12, tri-folded "*The Tennessean*" newspapers in his front basket, stands by his bicycle looking on in awe.

Reporter with Cameraman filming approach Paperboy.

REPORTER

What happened?

PAPERBOY

He flew around the corner.

(slaps flies away)

Then he just --flew.

REPORTER

Did he hit something? Did something run out in front of him?

PAPERBOY

(begins to tear-up)

He, he waved at me. Then his car started weaving all over. He looked at me and, and --.

All Club Personnel are trying to throw dirt, their water bottles, anything onto the Corvette's flames.

Beau comes over and puts his arm around Paperboy.

BEAU

It's okay. And --what?

PAPERBOY

(begins sobbing)

He --he smiled at me.

Paperboy buries his head in Beau's arms. Beau now knows exactly why he was put on this Earth and what he must do.

BEAU

There, there, son. It wasn't your fault.

(to self)

I know exactly who's fault it is.

JOSHUA

(screams to Heaven)

If not been in Court, none be here!

If ever a human cause vowed to fight City Hall or die trying, Beau just became their poster child.

EXT. NASHVILLE CITY CEMETERY - LATER THAT WEEK

Freebird's coffin is ready to be lowered into its grave.

M.O.A. Dancers are dressed in black suits with chrome chains running around one shoulder like a military fourragère cord. All Dancers are lined up, shoulder-to-shoulder.

Lancelot, Satin, Cool-Aid, Diamond, Mercedes, Old Stripper, and New Stripper, are in various black dress.

Cameraman and Reporter are on an overlooking hill filming.

MINISTER, dressed all in black looking like a cross between *John Huston* and *Bela Lugosi*, finishes his Service.

MINISTER

Amen.

EVERYONE

Amen.

Beau arrives. Joshua waves him over to join them. He does.

BEAU

I'm sure Freebird appreciates the irony of being laid here.

All Dancers "eyes right" as one to look at Beau.

BEAU

A lot of Nashville's Mayors still "lie" here.

Dancers all raise the same eye-brow at Beau.

BEAU

After our current Mayor went on "*The Phil Donahue Show*" back in October with his girlfriend to announce their engagement --.
(now in full gossip mode)
While still being married to his third wife --!

UNKNOWN MOURNERS, all former Ace-customers dressed in black, "*Shhhh*" Beau.

Beau lowers his voice.

BEAU (CONT'D)

He's been under a lot of scrutiny with some saying he only ran for office "here" to get away from his House of Representatives Ethics Committee investigation "there" in D.C. over his "close relationship" with a government contractor.

MINISTER

Ashes to ashes, dust to dust.

Unknown Mourners begin to exit.

BEAU

And that, Gentle Men, is what just happened down at City Hall.

All Ace of Spades and Auntie's personnel gather around Beau.

BEAU

I sent "pictures" anonymously to the Mayor's Office and guess who just resigned from the City Council for "health reasons?"

Beau *clucks* his tongue and snap-finger gun-points at them.

EVERYONE

Housy?

Beau nods smiling then tilts his head thinking out-loud.

BEAU

Wouldn't be surprised if he gets his own talk show someday.

EVERYONE

Hausy?

BEAU

No. Our Mayor, sillies. Sorry if you feel it's too little or too late but it's the best I could do.

Reporter followed by her Cameraman come to interview them.

REPORTER

Now that Councilman Hauser has announced his resignation, what plans do the Men of Aces have in their future. Are you going to relocate your club someplace else?

LANCELOT

No.

M.O.A.

"No?!"

Satin elbows Lancelot *"Tell them."* He won't so she does.

SATIN

Turns out the owners of our club
netted a hefty profit from selling
their building to investors under
the new zoning code and --.

LANCELOT

And that gave us enough bonus money
we can finally tour Europe.

Lancelot offers his arm to Satin. She takes it leaning her
head down on his lower shoulder so her wig moves.

Reporter moves her microphone towards Cool-Aid.

REPORTER

And the area's coolest disk jockey?

COOL-AID

Folks always want to dance to good
music, and as you just said, I'm the
best.

REPORTER

Actually I said --?

Reporter moves her mike to Ace.

REPORTER

As their self-appointed spokesman,
what happens now to Men of Ace's?

ACE

We not only changed all the rules
in this town, we turned them
completely upside down.

BEAU

And they wish to keep making people
think about what's right and what's
really wrong with our great city by
doing what they do best.

COUNTRY

Great! Where we doin' it?

ARETHA
(snap-finger-waves)
Everywhere!

SLEDGE
Damn right, bubba! We don't need no
stinkin' club. We are the club!

CANNON
So we book ourselves as an Act and
I know just the right Agent. Mine.

ACE
Hands!

All M.O.A. go hands-in. All hands go up and down twice then
break up.

M.O.A.
MEN OF ACE'S!

Reporter smiles then turns to camera to sign-out.

REPORTER
There you have it, Nashville. Out
of death, comes new life.

Satin and Lancelot kiss. M.O.A. Dancers back-slap each other.

REPORTER
The Men of Ace's are very much
alive, and may, just may, be coming
to prove it to your neighborhood
some day. Are you ready? Are any of
us? Reporting live from Nashville
City Cemetery --.

Joshua goes to Mercedes. Reporter hits Cameraman's shoulder
to follow them on-camera. He does.

In the history of romance, there have only been two kisses
that stood out over time. Theirs puts both to shame.

INT. FIRST BAPTIST CHURCH - WEEKS LATER

At one of the oldest churches in Nashville, Joshua and
Mercedes, both in traditional dress, take traditional vows in
front of the same Minister.

All of Ace of Spades and Auntie's personnel are there along
with most of their Nashville Crowds so standing room only.

MINISTER

You may kiss the bride.

Reporter hits the shoulder of Cameraman who begins filming.

Mercedes and Joshua's new kiss breaks their previous record.

FADE TO BLACK.

CAPTION: *Mercedes and Joshua are still married.*

FADE CAPTION: *The Men of Ace still dance today.*

FADE CAPTION: *Nashville's Ex-Mayor did get his own talk show.*

FADE OUT.