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1 EXT. APARTMENT BUILDING SIDEWALK - NIGHT 1

BENNIE WEBSTER, (28) a handsome Black nerd wearing wireless headphones, is grooving along to "THE BOMB" by Pigeon John as he approaches the entrance of his apartment. He passes a sketchy white van with a decal on the side that reads "Plumbing, Cable, & Painting Brothers".

2 INT. APARTMENT BUILDING LOBBY - CONTINUOUS 2

Dancing into the lobby, Bennie approaches the bank of mailboxes, tracing his finger over their brass fronts until he stops at Unit 9. Taking a new label out of his pocket, Bennie covers the old name "Harlow" with his name "Webster". He spots a package for "MRS. LANAHAH UNIT 9" and picks it up before entering the elevator.

3 INT. UPSTAIRS APARTMENT HALLWAY - CONTINUOUS 3

Bennie exits the elevator as MRS. LANAHAH, (80) frail old lady, is getting in. Just before the doors close, Bennie holds up the package.

BENNIE

(louder to speak over his music)

Hey Mrs. Lanaham! I brought this up for you! I'll leave it at your door.

The elevator doors begin to close.

MRS. LANAHAH

But that was what I was going downstairs to get-

Doors close as he walks away. Bennie places the package in front of her door. We see her apartment number "9" dangling to look like it says "6" before Bennie proceeds down the hallway to his apartment. He stops at the actual apartment #6 and fumbles with his keys when the music is interrupted by a video call from JOHN WRIGLEY, (34) a quick-witted human cartoon and the first person to crack a joke at the least appropriate time. Bennie hesitantly answers the call.

BENNIE

Hey bud I'm just getting home...

WRIGLEY (ON VIDEO CHAT)

Aaand what do you think of the place?

4 INT. BENNIE'S APARTMENT - CONTINUOUS

4

Bennie walks in the front door. The apartment is filled with half unpacked moving boxes and a single goldfish in a bowl.

BENNIE

Still unpacking and getting settled, but so far loving it here. How the hell did you find a furnished apartment on such short notice?

WRIGLEY (O.S.)

I knew him from work.

Bennie stops cold.

BENNIE

Tell me this isn't a dead man's apartment.

CUT TO:

5 INT. WRIGLEY'S CAR - NIGHT

5

CLOSE ON WRIGLEY

WRIGLEY

Not anymore. Now it's yours.

CAMERA PULLS OUT TO REVEAL

Wrigley is driving a hearse with Bennie on video chat.

BENNIE (O.S.)

Well, that explains all this junk.

WRIGLEY

Has your lady seen the new place?

BENNIE (O.S.)

Actually she's coming over tonight for date night... that I really need to get ready for so...

Wrigley's oblivious to the hint and plows through.

WRIGLEY

That's nice. I just picked something up for work and now I'm stuck in traffic with nothing to do. I'll keep you company.

BENNIE (O.S.)

(sighing)
Uh thanks.

6

INT. BENNIE'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

6

Bennie begrudgingly props the phone on some boxes as he begins to clean up the place. He picks up a retro bowling ball bag and places it near the goldfish bowl. He's so preoccupied that he doesn't notice the bag emitting a faint green light through the zipper before an arc of energy zaps the bowl turning the goldfish into an octopus.

BENNIE

This *needs* to go well. I offered to take her out to that new jazz club but all Tracy wanted was a quiet night in, so I got her favorite dim sum and we're gonna watch "CLICK".

WRIGLEY

Odd choice.

BENNIE

I mean it's not his strongest-

WRIGLEY

No that has Walken, Hasslehoff, and Terry Crews; What's not to love. I thought you swore off Dim Sum after the "China Mission"?

BENNIE

It's her favorite and we're working on "starting a new chapter". Really trying to make it work this time.

WRIGLEY

She must be happy with you being around more.

BENNIE

We both are! Leaving the agency was the best move we've ever made.

WRIGLEY

Don'tcha miss the craziness though?

BENNIE

Let me think about that - Nope not one bit. It's about time I give this whole "Normal Life" thing a shot.

Bennie fills a watering can, grabs the phone, and climbs out the window onto the fire escape garden.

7 EXT. OUTDOOR FIRE ESCAPE GARDEN - NIGHT

7

Bennie begins to water the plants with one hand as he continues his video-chat with Wrigley in the other.

WRIGLEY

Show me the view.

Bennie lifts the phone haphazardly as to show Wrigley the view over his shoulder. After watering his own plants, he notices his neighbor's soil is dry and squeezes across the deck to water her plants too when we hear a pounding sound at her front door.

WRIGLEY (CONT'D)

What was that?

BENNIE

No idea but it's in my neighbors apartment.

WRIGLEY

Look and see-

BENNIE

I'm not going to spy on my elderly neighbor!

The pounding increases.

MRS. LANAHAN (O.S)

I don't know who that is.

WRIGLEY

Fine then I'll do it! Point me in.

Bennie exhales with frustration and slowly slides the camera into the window.

We hear the sound of the door being kicked in.

WRIGLEY (O.S.) (CONT'D)

Bennie you gotta see this.

INT. MRS. LANAHAH'S APARTMENT

We see Bennie's phone with Wrigley's face in the window to the fire escape as Bennie's head leans into the window too-Little Rascal Style.

MRS. LANAHAH (O.S.)

Oh my!

REVERSE TO SEE MRS. LANAHAH ON THE FLOOR WITH TWO SUITED FIGURES STANDING OVER HER.

CLIVE (37), buff, tall and imposing but not the brightest bulb in the knife drawer and LANE (25), a calculating woman who's as short as her temper.

MRS. LANAHAH (CONT'D)

You have the wrong apartment-

CLIVE

Stop lying! Where's the orb?

MRS. LANAHAH

I... don't... know what you're talking... about!

LANE

Don't try to weasel out of this one, Grannie.

MRS. LANAHAH

Heavens to Betsy. All I have is hard candies. Do you want a Werther's Original?

LANE

I've had enough.

Lane pulls out a futuristic handheld blaster and zaps Mrs. Lanahan, turning her into a pile of glowing blue dust.

9

EXT. FIRE ESCAPE - CONTINUOUS (INTERCUT)

9

Bennie and Wrigley are both shocked as Bennie starts to back away from the window.

WRIGLEY

They dusted the old lady!

BENNIE

Yeah I saw!

10 INT. MRS. LANAHAN'S APARTMENT - CONTINUOUS (INTERCUT) 10

CLIVE

Did we have to zap her? She didn't even have the orb, and I wanted candy.

LANE

Doesn't matter. The boss said, "**NO loose ends!**"

Through the window we see and hear Bennie knock over a large potted plant which draws the attention of the thugs.

CLIVE

What was that?

LANE

A loose end.

11 EXT. FIRE ESCAPE - CONTINUOUS (INTERCUT) 11

Bennie rushes back to his apartment.

BENNIE

What the hell have you gotten me into this time.

WRIGLEY (O.S.)

Don't blame me.

BENNIE

I need to get out of here! Can you pick me up?

12 INT. WRIGLEY'S HEARSE - CONTINUOUS 12

WRIGLEY

(mockingly whisper)

I'll be there in 2 minutes!

Wrigley reaches behind him and knocks on the coffin that he's escorting.

WRIGLEY (CONT'D)

Welp, Mr. Harlow, your family's gonna have to wait.

13 EXT. STREET - NIGHT - WIDE SHOT (CONTINUOUS) 13

Wrigley and his hearse pull a wide U-Turn across all lanes of traffic, causing a jam. He speeds off, shouting out his window and waving his arm.

WRIGLEY
SORRY! FUNERAL EMERGENCY!!

14 INT. BENNIE'S APARTMENT - NIGHT 14

Bennie rushes to his front door and starts securing a series of locks left behind by the previous, obviously rightfully paranoid, tenant. From the bottom up, he flips a deadbolt, attaches a chain, then reaches the top lock - a white glass dial with an LED at the center. He turns that one too, causing it to light up and hum.

SECURITY VOICE FROM THE LOCK
Anti-trespassing ordinance is now active. Please provide security code to disarm.

BENNIE
Ordinance?!? Wrigley what'd you say the last tenant di-

There's a knock at the door.

CLIVE (O.S.)
Plumbing. Open up.

Bennie starts sliding boxes in front of the door.

BENNIE
Um, no, thank you! We didn't order any-

More aggressive knocking at the door.

LANE (O.S.)
Would you open up for cable?

BENNIE
No. Please leave!

LANE (O.S.)
Well, he obviously won't believe painters either. Get in there!

Suddenly a fist slams through the wall next to the door and starts unlocking all of the locks.

BENNIE

I said no thank you! Occupied! I'm
armed! I'm warning you!

He grabs the bowling ball bag and holds it up like he's ready
to swing. The door flies open.
An alarm rings and the lights turn green and start strobing.

SECURITY VOICE FROM THE LOCK

*Perimeter breached. Self-
destruction initiated. 3...*

BENNIE

LANE

Uh oh.

Uh oh.

Clive and Lane start to run down the hall.

SECURITY VOICE FROM THE LOCK

2...

Bennie darts towards the fire escape, clutching the bowling
ball bag close to his chest.

BOOM!

BENNIE'S NEW APARTMENT EXPLODES IN A HARSH BLUE LIGHT.

15

INT. WRIGLEY'S HEARSE

15

Wrigley is driving slowly down an alley.

CAR GPS

You are arriving to your
destination.

Wrigley looks out his open sun roof when he sees the blue
flash above him and hears the explosion. He slams on the
brakes as suddenly Bennie lands on the hood of the hearse,
clutching the glowing bowling ball bag tightly.

WRIGLEY

Ah!!

CAR GPS

You have arrived.

Sliding off the car, Bennie limps into the passenger seat.

Before Wrigley can ask any questions, the octopus suddenly
drops through the open moon roof, landing perfectly between
them. They look at each other in disbelief.

BENNIE

Drive!

The hearse peels out.

16 EXT. GRAVEL DRIVEWAY - NIGHT - LATER

16

The hearse putters to a stop. Bennie and Wrigley exit the car, holding the bowling ball bag and the octopus, as they start walking.

WRIGLEY

I'm just saying, I'd be happy to
URN her business.

BENNIE

Too soon, Wrigley. Too soon.

WRIGLEY

Look, *someone's* gonna manager her
estate. Might as well--

Bennie's struggling with the octopus that's now crawling all over him.

BENNIE

A little help here?

Wrigley points.

WRIGLEY

We can release the Kraken up here.

EXT. SMALL POND

They walk over to a little pond and try to release the octopus who's holding on tight to Bennie's arm.

BENNIE

Do you really think this will
survive out here?

As Bennie struggles and shakes the Octopus off his arm and into the water, Wrigley mimics Jeff Goldblum in Jurassic Park.

WRIGLEY

"Life finds a way"

They walk across a lawn littered with weird junk contraptions and failed inventions, including two halves of a car that looks like it was cut in half while teleporting.

BENNIE
MAN! Forget this!

Bennie turns to walk back the way they came, but Wrigley grabs his arm to prevent him from running away.

WRIGLEY
You really think I want to go to the kid after the nonsense she pulled in St. Louis?

BENNIE
Or Cleveland, or El Paso, or RENO!?! Every time we get Mel involved, things get-

WRIGLEY
I KNOW! But there's got to be a method behind her madness if she always manages to deliver. Right?!?

BENNIE
See, that's the thing! You ever think Mel watches too much TV and is just crazy lucky?

WRIGLEY
Yes, all the time, but that hasn't stopped us befo-

BENNIE
-Wrigley. I still cry whenever I see an ice cream truck...

They both stare off as if they're recalling a traumatic memory. We pan on their expressions as we hear loud crunching followed by:

VOICE (O.S.)
Oh god my legs!

The boys snap out of it. Wrigley points to the bag.

WRIGLEY
Look, Bennie, you have no idea what THAT THING is or why those people are after it! Out of everybody we know, she's the only one-

BENNIE
-What about-

WRIGLEY

Mickey? Died a 3 months ago.

BENNIE

Ok. What about the Bulgarian?

WRIGLEY

Also very dead. Well, at least from the waist up.

BENNIE

How do you-

WRIGLEY

Got his wife a great deal on the casket. Half off.

Bennie holds back a chuckle.

WRIGLEY (CONT'D)

You know he would have loved that joke.

BENNIE

Dude!

WRIGLEY

Mel is the *only* one left who might have some clue about what the hell you found AND not call in the FBI.

BENNIE

That's because the feds won't take her calls anymore! Let's just get this over with!

17 EXT. GARAGE PEDESTRIAN DOOR - NIGHT

17

Bennie and Wrigley approach the door of a garage workshop. Just before they knock on the door, Wrigley pulls away to put his phone, wallet, and keys behind a bush.

WRIGLEY

Laaaaast chance...

BENNIE

I'm already regretting this.

Wrigley knocks on the door.

MEL (O.S.)

Hold on...

A bright flash bursts out from under the ordinary-looking door.

MEL (O.S.) (CONT'D)
Ok. It's open!

Bennie tries to turn the doorknob, but it won't budge. Wrigley tries to pull and push, but nothing happens.

WRIGLEY
Yeah, it's just not working!

There are sounds of fumbling and things breaking before the door quickly slides open to reveal MELANIE HERSCH, (22) definitely odd, wearing heavily tinted goggles, a loud Hawaiian shirt, blacksmiths apron, and heavy-duty arm length gloves.

MEL
Hey guys!! Come on in before IT gets out...

BENNIE
(concerned)
It?

Mel gestures Bennie and Wrigley inside, looking both ways to see if they were followed, then slams the door shut.

18

INT. MEL'S WORKSHOP - NIGHT

18

Bennie is overwhelmed by the ridiculous tools and gadgets that MEL has built and strewn across every surface. He cautiously enters the room, trying to take it all in. Wrigley is completely unfazed and casually sits on a large metal tool chest.

MEL
If I had known you were stopping by, I would have made flan or ribs... y'know, something easy.

Mel walks past a table that has a Chessboard, Chinese Checkers set, and Connect 4 games, all currently mid-game, sitting in front of an empty birdcage. She quickly moves a piece on each game before going up to a steam-filled plexiglass box.

BENNIE
(exploring the room)
This won't take too long. You're clearly busy...

MEL

Oh, come now! I can always make time for old friends. Ya mind throwing your phone in the Faraday Cage before settling in though?

Bennie takes out his phone and places it in what looks like a copper wire basket. After closing the top, we see the bottom drop out and hear metal shredding before a small drawer pops out with a commemorative coin inside made of the compressed materials. Bennie shoots Wrigley a look, acknowledging the reason he left his phone outside.

WRIGLEY

They were probably tracking it!

A METALLIC SOUND "DINGS"

Mel swings open the steam-filled plexiglass box and pulls out an empty ceramic soup bowl.

MEL

(disappointed)

Aww...

WRIGLEY

You actually built it?!

BENNIE

Is it some kind of bowl transporter?

MEL

Don't be silly! It's a soup transporter.

BENNIE

(to self)

Why'd I even ask?

MEL

See I really like the soup from that bistro in town, but it doesn't travel well. So when life gave me lemons, I built a pair of soup transporters!

WRIGLEY

(at Bennie)

As one does...

MEL

Problem is I can *send* soup there but can't *receive* soup.

BENNIE
Ever try delivery?

MEL
DELIVERY!?! That's how they getcha.

WRIGLEY
Where's the incoming soup ending up?

MEL
See that's the thing! I don't know. By my estimates, it's within a mile. Anyway, what's in the bag?

WRIGLEY
That's why we're here.

MEL
I figured. What's in the bag?

BENNIE
We have no clue what it is.

WRIGLEY
Whatever it is, these armed thugs vaporized Bennie's neighbor and blew up his apartment looking for it.

MEL
(chuckling)
If I had a nickel! That's why I installed landmines around the perimeter.

BENNIE
(to Wrigley)
Did she just say landmines?

WRIGLEY
I believe she did.

MEL
Didn't you see the sign?

BENNIE
You mean that one?

Bennie points to an unhung sign leaning against the door.

MEL
Huh... Well, that explains why I haven't been getting my mail.
(MORE)

MEL (CONT'D)
 (Shrug) NOW! WOULD YOU PLEASE OPEN
 THE DAMN BAG!

Bennie carefully places the bag on the ground and unzips it. Light comes pouring out as a glowing humming sphere is revealed.

MEL (CONT'D)
 How'd you get this?

BENNIE
 Found it in my new apartment.

MEL
 Well, let's take a look, shall we?

Mel walks over to the glowing ball, passing by the table with all the board games and moving a piece on each game. She takes the ball out of the bag.

MEL (CONT'D)
 Help yourselves to some nuts or a
 cold beer. Both are in the fridge.

Bennie opens the fridge to find a prank can of nuts and rows of beer frozen in the shape of bottles without the actual bottles.

BENNIE
 (muttering to himself)
 Of course.

Mel takes the pulsating sphere over to what looks like a scanner and gently places it down; it rolls a little. She turns back to a table with a large array of old computer screens and keyboards, cracks her knuckles, and casually knocks everything off the surface, smashing the electronics to the ground. Bennie shakes the Can of Nuts and is about to open it with caution, expecting practical joke snakes to pop out when Mel extends her hand.

MEL
 (like a surgeon asking for
 a scalpel)
 Nut can.

Wrigley snatches the can and puts it in her hand. Mel opens it, tosses the mixed nuts over her shoulder, and uses the can as a base for the sphere to sit on so it doesn't roll away.

MEL (CONT'D)
 Pass me the thermo-deficient-coiler
 in the top drawer.

Bennie opens the top drawer, and a bunch of prank snakes fly out. Bennie is not amused, but Wrigley is pointing and laughing.

BENNIE
Mel, I hate you!

WRIGLEY
Classic snake gag!

BENNIE
You keep a drawer of these for this exact purpose?

MEL
Don't you?

BENNIE
No!

Mel notices something and is suddenly disappointed.

MEL
Damn it Churchill, you win again!

She walks over to the game table. The chess game is now in checkmate, all the Chinese Checker pieces have moved across the board, and there are five Connect 4 pieces in a row.

MEL (CONT'D)
Heck of a game player... Really knows how to sneak up on ya!

BENNIE
(Powering through)
Do you have any idea what this orb is?

MEL
I have an idea, but there's only one way to be sure...

19 EXT. FIELD - NIGHT - CONTINUOUS

19

Bennie is lugging two buckets of water, Wrigley is carrying a black 27-gallon plastic bin, Mel is carrying the sphere in one hand and a slowly leaking bag of birdseed in the other. They're all lit by the glow of the sphere.

BENNIE
Ok, I'll bite. What does the birdseed have to do with this?

MEL

It doesn't. I'm killing two birds
with one stone here.

WRIGLEY

Wait... what now?

MEL

I had a rooster that kept waking me
up too early...

WRIGLEY

The NERVE!

MEL

Right??? So I started lacing the
rooster's feed with octopus stem
cells because when was the last
time you heard an octopus crow?
Long story short... I gave it the
ability to camouflage.

WRIGLEY

Naturally...

The bag of seed empties, and Mel gestures for the guys to
stop and pour the water into the bin.

BENNIE

So you did a mad science
experiment, played god, and ruined
a poor creature's life?

MEL

To be fair, it started it!
Hopefully, this new seed mix will
fix everything.

Mel plops the sphere into the water-filled bin, pulls out an
old film canister, pops the top off, and casually throws it
into the water. Suddenly she darts off in the other
direction. Bennie and Wrigley pause, look at each other, then
down at the container as the water begins bubbling.

BENNIE

This is the shit I was talking
about!

WRIGLEY

Just run.

They sprint away as the bin explodes behind them in a giant
green splash. Nothing is left except green glowing water all
over the ground.

BENNIE
 (getting angrier and
 angrier)
 Man! I just wanted to watch Click!

WRIGLEY
 Ha! So you DID want to watch it!

BENNIE
 Yes! Okay?! I wanted to watch the
 damn movie and have a quiet night
 with girlfriend. Which reminds me--

MEL
 (looking around, lost in
 thought)
 Huh!...

BENNIE
 I gotta call Tracy!

Bennie reaches for his pockets only to realize.

BENNIE (CONT'D)
 I have no phone.

WRIGLEY
 Well, I guess with no sphere,
 there's no reason for those thugs
 to chase you.

BENNIE
 Mel, what was that?!

Mel continues looking around, lost in thought, looks up
 transfixed at the sky.

MEL
 (casually)
 Potassium.

BENNIE
 (Really angry now)
 Are you kidding me?!? You could
 have killed us!

MEL
 Meh, you're fine. I did the math.

BENNIE
 But you blew it up!!

WRIGLEY

(a la Planet of the Apes)
 You finally did it. You maniacs!
 You blew it up! Damn you! God damn
 you all to hell!

BENNIE

Solid Heston.

WRIGLEY

Thank you. To be fair, we didn't
 tell her not to?

BENNIE

NOR SHOULD WE HAVE TO! What now
 MEL? Now that you've obliterated
 our ONLY hope of figuring out what
 all this is about. What's next!?
 Superglue green glowing goo back
 into a ball? Do you know of any
 mystery orb stores that are open at
 this hou -- WAIT DON'T ANSWER THAT.
 When those goons show up, do you
 think they'll accept, "Oh, my old
 crazy friend BLEW IT UP!"?

Mel casually shoves Bennie as the sphere plummets from the sky and lands right where he was just standing. When it hits the ground, we hear a crunch and see a large plume of rooster feathers. The three stand over the crater where the smoking sphere landed perfectly intact, feathers floating down to the ground.

MEL, WRIGLEY, BENNIE

(all at the same time)

Huh!

MEL

I thought so!

WRIGLEY

Hey, the seeds worked!

MEL

Yeah AND *THAT'S* a durable
 container.

WRIGLEY

Container?

BENNIE

Wait so you've known what this
 thing's been the whole time?

MEL

Yeah, but I have no idea what's
inside. Have you guys tried opening
it?

WRIGLEY

(sarcastically)

We were waiting for you to loosen
it up with a small explosion.

Mel double taps on the sphere, twists, and opens it. We can't see what's inside but watch the three of them reacting to whatever it is as they're all illuminated in an even brighter green light.

MEL

(with childish delight)

Oh, I am so in!

WRIGLEY

See? I knew she was the right one
to bring this to.

BENNIE

Ok but this time I'm not letting
you use my shoes for anything!

The green light overtakes the screen and we

FADE TO:

20

EXT. AMERICAN SOUTHWEST DESERT - DAY

20

A low western guitar vamps in a 3/3 tempo. One continuous drone shot flies over vistas and bluffs of the barren desert as if it were a hawk searching for food. The shot focuses on a golden glimmer in the distance as the camera begins to fly towards it. As we get closer to the ground, we see a collection of holes dug into the earth ten feet apart. In the center of this field of holes, on the ground level, is the **LAWMAN** (Bennie but he doesn't know it) sitting on a pile of loose dirt and playing the guitar while whistling. On his chest is a highly polished Sheriff's badge with a bullet hole through the middle. Next to the Lawman we see dirt flying out of a hole and hear the shovel digging to the rhythm of the guitar. The dirt stops flying out of the hole; Lawman looks up but doesn't stop playing.

LAWMAN

Anyone say you could stop?

A tired voice is heard from inside the pit.

HARLOW (O.S.)
I DON'T WANT TO DO THIS ANYMORE!

The Lawman stands up, continuing to play as he walks to the edge of the hole and looks down, where we can see who he's talking to. Winston Harlow (Wrigley but he doesn't know it).

LAWMAN
You find where your gang stashed
the gold?

HARLOW
As I've told you several times
now... It wasn't MY gang! I wasn't
in charge! Merely a hired goon
working for my cuz. Just because
we're known as the "Cousins
Harlow", that doesn't delineate an
even share of power,
responsibilities, or role.

LAWMAN
So that's a no?

HARLOW
That's correct.

LAWMAN
Keep diggin'.

The Lawman turns to walk away.

HARLOW
Can I get some water at least?

LAWMAN
You drank your canteen already.
Should've rationed better.

HARLOW
Easy for you to say. You haven't
been the one diggin' all these
holes.

LAWMAN
I got 'nuff in mine to get us back
to town where I'll hand you over to
the Marshal... that is if you can
find your stash before the thirst
gets yah.

HARLOW
Well, if I die of thirst, then
you'll be handing over a corpse.

LAWMAN
True, but it's the same pay and at
least *I* won't be thirsty.

HARLOW
The hell kind of Law Man are you?

LAWMAN
The temporary kind.

Harlow stops digging.

HARLOW
I'm sorry, ya wanna run that by me
one more time.

LAWMAN
I was a musician; now I'm the
Sheriff.

HARLOW
That's one hell of a career leap.

LAWMAN
Had no choice.

HARLOW
Why'd you switch?

LAWMAN
Well, you and your gang-

HARLOW
(interrupting/correcting)
Not my gang.

LAWMAN (CONT'D)
-burned down the saloon and *shot*
the Sheriff.

HARLOW
Well, how do you know that was *me*?

CUT TO:

21 INT. SALOON ENTRANCE - DAY - FLASHBACK

21

Harlow stands in front of swinging saloon doors, holding a big burlap sack filled with loot. We hear the commotion as they rob the place.

HARLOW
 (PROUDLY)
 Good afternoon, ladies and gentlemen! My name is Winston Harlow, and the men currently robbing you are my cousins.

WOMAN (O.S.)
 You'll never get away with this!

HARLOW
 Well, ma'am, with all due respect, I personally dispatched your sheriff not 10 minutes ago, so I think we just might. Especially after I burn this saloon to the ground.

END FLASHBACK

22 EXT. DESERT - DAY

22

Harlow is visibly frustrated.

HARLOW
 Okay, but that still doesn't explain-

LAWMAN
 -When I showed up later that day for my new job in the saloon band, one of the regulars told me what had happened. Moreover, how I was out of a job. Lucky for me, the position of Sheriff had recently been vacated.

HARLOW
 So you're just going to take the word of some drunk...

Lawman reaches into his back pocket and pulls out a folded stack of wanted posters. He tosses each one into the pit after reading them.

LAWMAN
 WANTED The Cousins Harlow for the robbery of the Little General Store in the small town of Big Rock.
 WANTED the Cousins Harlow for the Easter Robbery of the First Church of Santa Cabasa.

Harlow catches one of the pages as it falls. As he takes a closer look, we see him get upset.

HARLOW

They could never get my nose right!

Lawman pauses before reading the last page.

LAWMAN

WANTED Winston Harlow for the crime of running out on his tab and assault. Says here in a drunken rage, Harlow cut off the nose of the newspaper sketch artist. Witnesses describe Harlow standing over the victim shouting, "maybe this will give you a better reference for what a nose looks like"

HARLOW

Buuuuuut this time they'll get my nose right!.. If I did it, that is.

LAWMAN

Wow, you sure are good at diggin' yourself a hole.

HARLOW

Look sheriff, I'm going to level with you.

LAWMAN

By all means...

HARLOW

I don't exactly remember where we buried the loot. We were drunk after celebrating another successful heist when we stashed it.

LAWMAN

(Changing his tone)

Well, why didn't you say so? Now I can help you!

HARLOW

Wait really?

LAWMAN

Sure. My Pops taught me a trick for remembering things.

HARLOW

Oh?

LAWMAN

He said, "Son, if you can't remember where something is, just do some physical task that can take your mind off it."

HARLOW

(Realizing he walked into that one)

...like digging a hole?

LAWMAN

Now, that is a great idea.

HARLOW

Wow your pop was a smart man. What did he do for a living?

LAWMAN

Newspaper Sketch Artist.

The friendly expressions melt off their faces. Harlow begins to dig again as Lawman turns around to see ABIGAIL SAINT JAMES (Mel but she doesn't know it) running up to them. Abigail has a suitcase in one hand and keeps her other hand in the air as she spins around to show she's not armed and speaks quickly, almost frantically.

ABIGAIL

Afternoon Gentlemen, I assure you I am unarmed and mean you no harm.

LAWMAN

For yer sake, I hope you ain't lyin'.

ABIGAIL

My name is Abigail Saint James and I am but a humble tincture and tonic saleswoman. My associates call me "Honest Abby".

LAWMAN

Like the president?

ABIGAIL

I am unfamiliar with anyone else sharing the moniker BUT what I am familiar with is good wholesome remedies that alleviate your ills, aren't pills, and will do so with zero frills.

With a flick of the wrist, Abigail's suitcase turns into a table and display.

ABIGAIL (CONT'D)

Now, with all this excavating you and your subterranean acquaintance have been up to, y'all must be awful sore. Lucky for you I happen to have just the tonic to help.

Abigail begins to rummage through the suitcase. We hear the sounds of glass vials clinking together. She pulls out a corked glass bottle filled with foggy green liquid. The bottle's label reads "Serge's Strong Arm Tonic".

LAWMAN

(Trying to get a word in)
Ma'am I don't think-

Abigail is getting into a rhythm and cannot be fazed.

ABIGAIL

-and nor should you have to THINK with a deal like this! Why this elixir is so powerful, so innovative, so in demand that this is my very last bottle. Honestly, gentlemen, I'd get more if I could but the ingredients are oh so very hard to find! One part Parisian juniper berry, two ounces of Himalayan spring water, and EXACTLY six and one-half tears of a Strong Man.

LAWMAN

Ms. Abigail, I don't-

ABIGAIL

-Need such a tonic because you're clearly in the best shape of your life. I MEAN JUST LOOK AT YOU! You're a FINE upstanding lawman out here doing the lord's work. I, too, am a good Christian woman myself.

(MORE)

ABIGAIL (CONT'D)

Why every Sunday, I bring my eight daughters to church to sit in the front row cause we want to be as close to the lord's word as physically possible.

HARLOW (O.S.)

Did she say EIGHT?!?

ABIGAIL

(shouting into the hole)

Sure did!

Abigail pulls out her wallet, and an an accordion of photographs unfurls as she opens it. She points to each one as she rapid fire runs down the list of names.

ABIGAIL (CONT'D)

From oldest to youngest, we have Betty-Lynn, Anna-Lynn, Annie-Anne, Mary-Lou, Mary-Kate, Kathy-Lee, Lilly-May, and the cutest of the lot... BOONE!

LAWMAN

(snapping)

MS. ABIGAIL!

ABIGAIL

Mmmmyess?

LAWMAN

Apologies, but I simply don't have any money to give you.

ABIGAIL

And what of the man in the pit?

HARLOW

If I had any money, do you think I would be digging these holes?

ABIGAIL

Welp. Can't blame a woman for trying! Guess I'll be on my way...

With a kick of her heel, Abigail retracts the display, closes the suitcase, and turns to walk away but stops to look over her shoulder.

ABIGAIL (CONT'D)

Gentlemen. A thought has just struck me of a Vesuvian magnitude. What if...

(MORE)

ABIGAIL (CONT'D)
 again just throwing this out
 there... as if my cranium were
 filled with a thunder of ideas...

HARLOW
 There has got to be a better way to
 say that.

ABIGAIL
 What if we were to trade?

LAWMAN
 Like I said, we ain't got no money.

ABIGAIL
 Right but walking a path so
 straight and narrow in nature has
 left me simply parched. I couldn't
 help but spot your canteen over
 there.

Abigail gestures to the Sheriff's canteen while pulling two
 vials from her petticoat.

ABIGAIL (CONT'D)
 Two of my finest strumming
 tinctures, guaranteed to set free
 that psalm from deep inside your
 sullen songbird soul, and all I'm
 askin' in return is just a measly
 half of your canteen.

LAWMAN
 If you're so thirsty, why not just
 drink those?

ABIGAIL
 One musn't get high on their own
 supply as they might say. Plus what
 kind of a good Christian would I be
 if I were to rob you of the
 experience?

LAWMAN
 I've got enough water to get myself
 back to town, and the man in the
 pit drank all his.

HARLOW
 (examining one of the
 posters)
 We get it. I suck at water
 rationing and hiding gold.

Abigail stops in her tracks.

LAWMAN
And apparently digging.

ABIGAIL
Gold you say?

LAWMAN
It ain't his to spend. That is...
if he can find it.

ABIGAIL
I hear you loud and clear. Totally
understood. Mind if rest my weary
feet for a few moments before
heading on?

Harlow inspects one of the Wanted Posters more closely.

HARLOW
May I interest you in a hole or a
shovel?

ABIGAIL
Sadly, I must refuse. You see? I
dug just earlier this morning, but
I would love to examine the
Lawman's strum box there.

LAWMAN
By all means.

Lawman hands the guitar to Abby. She looks it over, holding
it upside down.

ABIGAIL
Haven't seen such a fine lap fiddle
since I was performing with my
brother on the train to Tuscalooma.

Harlow flips over a WANTED poster seeing a posting for "The
Siblings Nondeplume" for the robbery of the train from
Tuscalooma.

HARLOW
Umm... Lawman...

ABIGAIL
I was the singer while he was the
pluck of the operation.

HARLOW
LAWMAN... I really-

LAWMAN
-Less interruptin' more diggin'

The Lawman kicks some dirt at Harlow.

ABIGAIL
Those years working the rails were
some of the best money we ever
made.

HARLOW
LAWMAN!

LAWMAN
What?!? What could-

As Lawman turns around to yell at Harlow, Abigail takes advantage of the moment and smashes the guitar over the Lawman's head.

CUT TO BLACK.

23

EXT. PIT ONE - DAY - LATER

23

Lawman fades back from consciousness to see Harlow standing over him. **The fall has snapped Bennie out of the genre lay on** - making him realize he's not Lawman but in fact, Bennie Davis. Harlow, still unaware that something strange is going on, reaches down to help him up.

BENNIE
(still woozy)
Wrigley?

HARLOW
Wow, Lawman, you must have bumped
your head harder than I thought.

BENNIE
What did I land on?

HARLOW
(Dusting himself off and
holding his shoulder)
Me.

Abigail whistles from above, drawing the attention of the men in the pit.

ABIGAIL
It appears you gentlemen are up
excrement's river.

HARLOW

There has got to be a better way of saying that!

BENNIE

Mel? Why are you talking like that? What the hell is going on here?

ABIGAIL

What has happened is I now have the high ground in our negotiations.

BENNIE

Tracy is going to kill me! Would you stop screwing around and pass us the rope so we can get out?

ABIGAIL

(Coyly)

What? This rope?

Abby lifts the rope and tosses it blindly behind her.

BENNIE

(to Harlow)

Will you do something!?

HARLOW

YOU DO SOMETHING! Yer the lawman here! I tried to warn you that she isn't a tonic saleswoman! She's one of the Siblings Nondeplume.

Harlow shoves the wanted poster into Bennie. Bennie reads the poster and is even more confused.

ABIGAIL

Yes, you caught me! My real name is Abigail Nondeplume. As in the infamous train robber!

BENNIE

(to Abigail)

NO, your name is Melanie Hersch, and you were born in Yonkers!

ABIGAIL

(confused)

Ummm...

BENNIE

(to Harlow)

And you're John Wrigley! We all went to college together!

(MORE)

BENNIE (CONT'D)

We were just at Mel's house! The
soup transporter!? Glowing bowling
ball bag!? Invisible rooster? ANY
OF THIS RINGING A BELL?!?

Harlow, wide-eyed, nods in agreement as he slowly turns to
Abigail.

HARLOW

I think the lawman's lost it.

ABIGAIL

Speaking of things that have been
lost. Where is this stashed gold?

HARLOW

Well, now that you framed the
question like that... I STILL DON'T
KNOW!

ABIGAIL

Best keep digging then.

HARLOW

Oh great, this ol' chestnut again.

BENNIE

I don't know what has gotten into
both of you, but Wrigley, will you
just give me a boost up?

HARLOW

So you can take me back to town and
hang me? Yeah, that is going to be
a hard pass.

ABIGAIL

I would be happy to help you out of
there if only I wasn't so parched.
Why my throat is dryer than an
Englishman's wit. Why I am SO
THIRSTY that-

BENNIE

-If you're so thirsty... Here!

Bennie chucks his canteen over Abigail's head. As she reaches
to catch it, she stumbles into the hole behind her.

Mel, now snapped out of her genre persona, lays confused in a
cloud of dust.

MEL
Where the hell am I?

BENNIE (O.S.)
YOU WANTED THE WATER!

MEL
Bennie, is that you?!

25 EXT. PIT ONE - CONTINUOUS (INTERCUT)

25

BENNIE
Mel! What's happening here?

MEL (O.S.)
That orb must have thrown us across
an Einstein-Rosen bridge into a
western-themed parallel universe...

Bennie and Harlow share a confused glance.

BENNIE HARLOW
What the fuck? What in tarnations?

26 EXT. PIT TWO - CONTINUOUS (INTERCUT)

26

MEL
Oh, Wrigley must still be stuck in
the genre.

HARLOW (O.S.)
I'm not falling for this!

Mel attempts to run and climb out of the hole but can't get a
foothold and slides back into the pit. As she stumbles
backward, the dirt erodes revealing a wrought iron box
emitting the same green light from the glowing bowling ball
bag.

MEL
Huh!...

BENNIE (O.S.)
Oh, I know that "Huh!..."! You have
an idea!

Mel ties the rope to the exposed side handle of the buried
chest.

MEL
Perhaps... Catch this!

After a few comical failures, Mel successfully throws the rope into Pit One.

27

EXT. PIT ONE - DAY

27

Rope falls in.

BENNIE

Let's go.

HARLOW

I ain't trustin some good for nothin shyster. What if she's waitin out there to shoot us?

BENNIE

We are in a pit. Why wouldn't she just shoot us now?

HARLOW

Well, the longer I spend in this pit, the less likely we'll get to the Marshal in time.

BENNIE

(frustrated)

None of this is real! Which means there's no Marshal. So whomever you think you are could you give me a lift.

HARLOW

Na-uh! I'm not going anywhere with you!

Bennie is fed up and slaps him hard in the face, **snapping Wrigley out of the genre lay on.**

WRIGLEY

Bennie!! Why'd you slap me?

BENNIE

Ha! So you do know it's me!

WRIGLEY

Of course I know it's you. Why'd you slap me?!?

BENNIE

Can't argue when it works.

WRIGLEY

Beg to differ.

BENNIE

Do you want to argue or do you want to get out of this hole?

WRIGLEY

I want to argue. Why'd you slap me?

BENNIE

Trust me. We have to go. You can get me back double next time.

WRIGLEY

I'm holding you to that!

Bennie and Wrigley climb the rope to get out of Pit One and walk over to Pit Two, where Mel is still stuck. They grab the rope extending from Pit Two and brace for her to make her way up. She climbs out and runs out of frame.

MEL (O.S.)

Don't drop that rope!

BENNIE

I told you things always get weird with her.

WRIGLEY

It's *your* orb.

BENNIE

No no. It's *your* dead client's orb!

WRIGLEY

I wonder what the hell Mr. Harlow was up to.

BENNIE

Wait. Harlow? That sounds familiar.

WRIGLEY

He was the stiff I was driving when this whole thing started.

BENNIE

Right.

Mel returns, dragging over a large wagon wheel to the edge of Pit Two. She slides the now narrow neck of the guitar through the center of the wheel to function as an axle, feeds the rope through it, and sets up a pulley-like simple machine.

MEL

Now pull!!

They all pull on the rope. At first, it feels stuck, like they'll never make progress, but then it starts to give.

MEL (CONT'D)

Really pull!!

WRIGLEY

Why do my arms feel like I've been digging for days?

As all three of them continue to pull on the rope, the chest flies out of the ground and into the air, where it flails open, sending the orb soaring. They all look at each other in shock and rush to catch the glowing magical device, but they're too slow, and it falls to the ground, lighting up and whirring upon impact.

BENNIE

Not again!!

WRIGLEY (CONT'D)

Oh come on!

The familiar green flash overtakes the screen as we

FADE TO:

29

EXT. SHADOWY STREET - NIGHT

29

The world turns black and white. Saxophones, muted trumpets, and hi-hats accompany what is now a Film Noir world. Through a cigarette haze, we see Bennie, now DICK, walking through the pouring rain dressed as a 1930s detective.

DICK (V.O.)

Funny. A city's rhythm is a clock to those who work these streets. Minutes. Hours. It didn't matter. I'd wait all night if I had to.

Dick looks up to the sky as if he doesn't understand.

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

It's not a perfect metaphor, but it makes just about as much sense as anything in this damn case. Something didn't seem right, and I was going to get to the bottom of this, like cement shoes in the Hudson or a dog licking a pudding cup.

Dick stops in his tracks as the camera pans up to see a boarded-up jazz club. The marquee reads "The Red Herring". Dick hops a fence and sneaks in through a boarded-up side entrance.

DICK (V.O.) (CONT'D)
 Every bone in my body told me to turn around faster than a over-greased carousel. I should leave this mess behind me, but like a free buffet, my gut wouldn't let this go.

30 INT. ABANDONED JAZZ CLUB HALLWAY - NIGHT

30

Dick pulls out his flashlight and walks through a dimly lit backstage hallway. Photographs pepper the walls acting as windows into the nightlife of a forgotten yesteryear.

DICK (V.O.)
 In it's prime, this place was filled with plucks, schmucks, and yuk yuks. Behind it's done-up facade were rotten foundations infested with every low-life degenerate this side of 23rd street. I guess that's why it felt so much like home. But y'know what they say, you never can go home again.

31 INT. ABANDONED JAZZ CLUB MAIN STAGE

31

In the center of the empty club's stage, a beam of light from a hole in the roof illuminates a tied-up Wrigley.

WRIGLEY
 It's about damn time!

DICK
 It's always a matter of time isn't it, old chum?

Dick moves slowly, taking in the whole room. He approaches the bar grabbing a tumbler, blowing into it to remove any dust. He proceeds to take out a flask and pour himself a drink.

WRIGLEY
 What the hell are you doing? Aren't you going to untie me?

DICK
 Why would I untie you when I have you right where I want you.

WRIGLEY

Oh, you're still stuck in the genre...

DICK

The only thing this gumshoe is stuck to is this case.

WRIGLEY

Yeah. Clever wordplay aside...
Would you untie me so we can find Mel?

DICK

I'll help you find your "Mel" when you give me what I want.

WRIGLEY

(mockingly predicting)
Is what you want-

WRIGLEY (CONT'D)

-answers?

DICK

ANSWERS!

Wrigley realizes he must play along and lets out a begrudging sigh.

WRIGLEY (CONT'D)

You said we were old friends, right?

DICK

Back when we were coming up through the academy, we were inseparable.

WRIGLEY

Yeah yeah... and! I'm assuming we were on the force together?

DICK

Of course! We were unstoppable Detectives, Dick and Yancy.

WRIGLEY

Yancy!?

DICK

This city's nefarious underbelly was no match for us.

Flipping on a dramatic dime, Dick throws the tumbler against the wall!

DICK (CONT'D)
 BUT THEN YOU THREW IT ALL AWAY!

Dick broods for a moment before pouring himself another drink.

DICK (CONT'D)
 You just couldn't stand the fact
 that she went home with ME that
 night!

WRIGLEY
 I've learned to live with it?

ESMERELDA (O.S.)
 But I haven't.

ESMERELDA, Mel but she doesn't seem to know it yet, steps out of the shadows wearing a cocktail dress and oversized mink with a smoldering cigarette holder stretching out from her fingertips. A flair from the saxophone!

ESMERELDA (CONT'D)
 I've struggled with that choice
 every day since.

DICK
 Esme! Please, I can explain.

ESMERELDA
 Save your words, Dick. They mean
 nothing!

Dick throws his second glass against the wall, shattering it and sending his drink everywhere. He grabs two more glasses, pours new drinks, and hands one to Esmerelda.

ESMERELDA (CONT'D)
 Ah, "pocket hooch". Used to be my
 favorite, but times change.

WRIGLEY
 You guys! Snap out of it! You don't
 have the history you think you do.

DICK
 A love like ours is never in the
 past.

ESMERELDA
 It isn't in our future either.

DICK

Isn't it enough you threw me out once?

ESMERELDA

After what you did, I'd throw you out a thousand times.

WRIGLEY

Come on! You can't even say what happened. This is all an illusion or something; wake up!

ESMERELDA

Sounds like you could use a drink.

She holds out her drink for Wrigley to take, despite his hands and arms being tied up. After holding a beat, she drops the glass on him, splashing him before it falls to the floor and shatters. Dick retrieves another glass and fills it up for Esmerelda.

WRIGLEY

Can't you see? There's an impossible amount of liquid in that flask! None of this can be real.

Wrigley uses his entire body to shuffle his chair towards Dick.

WRIGLEY (CONT'D)

Dick.

DICK

That's Richard to you. Only my real friends call me Dick.

WRIGLEY

Fine. Richard. I would be happy to answer any questions and clear up everything *if* you'd just untie me.

DICK

How do I know you won't just hurt me again?

WRIGLEY

You don't, but... sometimes you just have to take a risk and trust your *friends* will catch you.

ESMERELDA

The Dick I know would never change his tune so easily.

DICK
Like you said sweetheart. "Times
change."

Almost as if it were an act of defiance, Dick kneels down to
Wrigley and unties him.

DICK (CONT'D)
Leave it to you to-

WRIGLEY
Would you snap out of it!?!

Wrigley immediately slaps Dick, **snapping him out of the genre
lay on.**

BENNIE
Thank you Wrigley.

Shaking it off, Bennie turns back to Wrigley as Wrigley slaps
him for the second time.

BENNIE (CONT'D)
Hey!

WRIGLEY
Now we're even. So how do we wake
up Mel?

BENNIE
I'm not going to slap a woman.

MEL
(dropping the bit)
No need, I just thought it was fun.
I'm glad you're both back to
yourselves now. I know what's going
on, and it has to do with this!

Mel holds up a briefcase that's emitting a white light.

INT. ABANDONED JAZZ CLUB HALLWAY - CONTINUOUS

They stop next to an exit.

BENNIE
Isn't that supposed to be glowing
green?

MEL
I think it is green, but we're
stuck in black and white.

WRIGLEY
 (lighting a cigarette)
 Ain't that the truth.

Wrigley inhales and immediately goes into a coughing fit.

WRIGLEY (CONT'D)
 Wait a second...! I don't smoke.

MEL
 That isn't good.

BENNIE
 Yes, objectively, cigarettes are
 bad for your health...

MEL
 No. I fear that the longer we're in
 these anomalies, the more we lose
 our original selves to the genre.
 We've gotta get out of here.

BENNIE
 No shit, Sherlock.

WRIGLEY
 Actually, it looks like you were
 the detective in this one.

BENNIE
 Mel, what do we do here?

MEL
 It seems as if every time we open
 the case and interact with the
 anomaly inside, we're thrown into
 another reality.

BENNIE
 So how do we stop it?

MEL
 That's the tricky part. We can't.

WRIGLEY
 How do we get out then?

We hear police sirens and cars screeching up outside.

EXT. ABANDONED JAZZ CLUB - NIGHT

The reflection of the jazz club can be seen in a puddle as a
 booted foot stomps into it.

CAMERA PANS UP, FOLLOWING THE SUITED FIGURE TO REVEAL

Clive and Lane, in full 1940s/ 50s-era cop regalia, stepping out of the car.

CLIVE

There's nowhere to run! Come out on the count of 5 or we start firing.

MEL (O.S.)

You'll never take us alive, Coppers!!

LANE

ONE!

INT. ABANDONED JAZZ CLUB HALLWAY - CONTINUOUS

WRIGLEY

What the hell are you doing, Mel?

CLIVE (O.S.)

TWO!

MEL

Testing a theory! I need you two to get the door as soon as this lock is opened.

LANE (O.S.)

THREE!

BENNIE

You better be right about this!

Mel cracks the locks of the briefcase as Bennie and Wrigley prepare to open the doors. They nod to each other.

CLIVE (O.S.)

FOUR!

Bennie and Wrigley kick the doors, breaking the boards off as they burst open. Mel points the case at the police outside. The doorway is filled with light, and all we see are their silhouettes.

LANE (O.S.)

FIVE! FIRE!

The screen fills with white light as we hear gunfire.

FADE TO:

32 EXT. FIELD - NIGHT

32

Close up on Bennie, Wrigley, and Mel laying in a field in full color, smoke coming off their clothes. We pull out to see all three of them waking up in a daze surrounded by rooster feathers.

BENNIE

Does everybody know who they are?

MEL

Does anybody really?

BENNIE

Clearly still Mel!

WRIGLEY

We appear to be in color! I think we're out of the woods.

MEL

Huh!

BENNIE

Don't you "huh!" me! We're back! We did it! Everyone gets to go home! I get to be with Tracy, I'm having my normal night.

MEL

(Looking slightly concerned)

That orb was glowing green before.

Wrigley and Bennie turn to see the orb is now blinking red.

BENNIE

Damn it!

Suddenly three spotlights illuminate Mel, Wrigley, and Bennie as a massive spaceship de-cloaks above.

33 INT. SPACESHIP CONTROL DECK

33

Lane and Clive sit at the helm of a futuristic spaceship with a crew of people manning stations around the deck. All the crew members are exact duplicates of Lane and Clive.

CAPTAIN LANE

We've got it now!

34 EXT. FIELD

34

A loudspeaker projects a booming alien voice from the ship.

ALIEN LANE (O.S.)
STEP AWAY FROM THE REALITY ORB!

Bennie takes a step back, and his foot drops into a puddle. We hear the splash, and Bennie freezes, not looking down.

BENNIE
(already knowing the
answer)
Tell me I'm not standing in a
puddle of chicken noodle soup.

MEL
Actually, it looks like that's the
bisque.

Off Bennie looking like he's about to scream.

CUT TO BLACK.

END PILOT