

(Name of Project)

by  
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(Based on, If Any)

Revisions by  
(Names of Subsequent Writers,  
in Order of Work Performed)

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(Current Writer, date)

Name (of company, if applicable)  
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A title burns in:

"DYNASTY"

FADE TO BLACK

The screen remains unlit. In the darkness, the stroked drone of a lone berimbau, primitive and primal...

A drum joins in, then another, and another, then handclapping and singing, all rising in volume and intensity until the darkened theater ROCKS TO A FULL COURT PRESS OF MUSIC AND PERCUSSION...

LIGHT!

In a dirt clearing fringed by palms and banana trees, TWO LITHE YOUNG MEN kick, flip, gyre, and cartwheel around one another in a remarkable display of acrobatic prowess. They, like their companions who are providing the music we hear, wear only the roughest cotton pants tied with rope at the waist and reaching to just below the knees.

Super on Screen:

AFRICAN SLAVES ON A SUGARCANE PLANTATION IN BAHIA,  
BRAZIL, SOMETIME DURING THE 19th CENTURY

As the men continue to move another sound can be heard developing - almost imperceptible at first - a distant staccato counterpoint to the drumming. It evolves into POUNDING HOOVES drawing closer and closer.

The slaves fall still and quiet...

IN A RUSH THEIR PERIMETER IS BROKEN; armed men riding in, reining up snorting, stamping charges with clearly branded haunches: CIRCLE CB

A tense standoff...

CRACK! A truncheon falls across the side of one slave's head. He crumples to the ground and another, the BERIMBAU PLAYER, stoops to help him.

CRACK! A whip reaches out and lashes this man's back. Slowly, almost majestically, the man rises and turns to face his tormentor head-on.

His berimbau lays in the dust. The long bow has been carved into a series of heads, one atop another. The calabash is emblazoned with lightning strokes.

ANOTHER LASH OF THE WHIP -- but this time it's caught and held taut by the Slave's powerful arm. He stares unflinchingly into the eyes of the Overseer.

Without his eyes deviating he says under his breath, but loud enough for his compatriots to hear:

ANCESTOR  
Axé... (ah-shay')

The others repeat it to themselves.

Then a cry!

ANCESTOR (cont'd)  
VIVA ZUMBI!

PUNCHING ONE FIST DEFIANTLY INTO THE AIR, the Ancestor pulls mightily with the other, bringing the Overseer down to a hard fall in the dust.

The slaves are on the offensive now -- dancing like Baryshnikovs and hitting like Kalashnikovs -- whirling, gyring, cartwheeling and kicking in a mortal version of what they had been practicing amongst themselves just moments before. One of the intrepid stretches his hands overhead and LEAPS for a man on horseback. He rises in SLO-MO...

SMASH CUT TO:

INT. ARENA - NIGHT

À LA 2001: A SPACE ODYSSEY THE LEAPING MAN BECOMES A BASKETBALL PLAYER GOING UP FOR A SLAM DUNK...

WHOOSH! The ball is rammed through the net.

Super on Screen:

MADISON SQUARE GARDEN

THE CROWD stands up and goes wild. FIND a MIDDLE-AGED MAN and a TEENAGER side-by-side, wearing identical Knicks caps. These are JOE (who speaks with a thick accent) and his son ZOOM (who is as American as sweet potato pie). The boy's clenched fist is rammed into the air.

ZOOM  
APACHEEEEEEEEEEE!

Joe is on his feet too. He looks at Zoom (what?!).

JOE  
Apache?!

Opposing team moves down court. Takes a low percentage shot. Knicks rebound.

ZOOM  
(yelling)  
Yeah. Apache! "A"... "H"...

Fast break. Pass to the Forward.

ZOOM (cont'd)  
Sixty-four "A"...

Up ahead to a streaking Guard, who lobs the ball to the cherry picking Center, who leaps into the air, grabs the ball in mid-flight, rocks the cradle and...

ZOOM (cont'd)  
Attack...

Slams another one through! Zoom throws his hands up.

ZOOM (cont'd)  
HELICOPTERRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRR!!!

Joe's figuring it out.

He cups his hand to his mouth like an Indian in a John Ford western and looks back out to the game:

JOE  
(Indian call)  
AWAWAWAWAWAWAWA!

It drowns into the general uproar of the arena.

JOE (cont'd)  
I ain't seen this many air raids  
since the Gulf War!

They sit back down along with the rest of the spectators.

Coming across the row (...excuse us...excuse us...excuse us...) a COUPLE begins to edge their way past the two. Joe pulls his legs in. Zoom lets the man pass and as the attractive YOUNG WOMAN is struggling by he looks up at her and flashes a simultaneous WINK/SALUTE.

She crinkles her mouth in distaste and moves on.

JOE (cont'd)  
What the hell was that?!

ZOOM  
The one-eyed salute! Probably been  
a while since you snapped one.

JOE  
Maybe it's been a while since I had  
a good reason to! An' you're givin'  
me a hard time? I ain't the one  
salutin' the crack of dawn!

Joe stops a vendor and grabs a couple of dogs, passing one over.

JOE (cont'd)  
An' that's the closest thing to  
pussy you ever get!

Another SCORE and Joe and Zoom are on their feet again, SCREAMING again along with fifteen thousand other rabid Knicks fans...

Until Joe's EYES CLINCH SHUT and his hot dog hits the floor. He COLLAPSES into his seat.

Zoom's next comment is to empty space. He joins his father. The rest of the crowd is still up.

ZOOM  
Hey Dad! You alright?

Joe hangs in there for a few moments.

JOE  
I think so. It was like a dizzy  
spell. I knew I was pushin' my luck  
with the cheap beer and those bombs  
in a bun they bribe the health  
department to let 'em sell here.  
(pause)  
Ya mind if we get going son?

ZOOM  
During the third quarter...?

JOE  
The next dog on the floor's gonna  
be me! C'mon...give me a hand. I'll  
make it up to you.

ZOOM  
How far up?

JOE  
I ain't an astronaut.

ZOOM  
Neither are the Rangers. But you  
get as high as a couple of tickets  
and we're outta here.

JOE  
The RANGERS! Since when do you care  
anything about the Kings of Swing!

ZOOM  
I like the fights.

JOE  
Those aren't fights...they're  
brawls. And a brawl ain't a good  
fight. A good fight's gotta have  
control.

They're heading up the aisle toward the exit.

JOE (cont'd)  
But I could throw a coupla tickets  
on my Master Card. You might learn  
something. Maybe this dizzy spell  
will turn out to be a good thing...

ZOOM  
That'd depend on how the Rangers  
do... wouldn't it?

A few beats, a confused look.

JOE  
I don't know who it'd depend on  
son...

FADE TO BLACK

A title burns in:

"ANOTHER WORLD"

INT: A SUBWAY CAR - LOUD AND SINISTER

Otherwise empty. Joe and Zoom ride home in roaring silence.

Joe rests his head back and lets it roll with the jostle of  
the subway. A moment passes. He looks up and mouths a few  
words silently.

Zoom looks at his father like he's retarded.

ZOOM  
What are you doin' Dad? You look  
like a crazy on the subway!

JOE  
I'm prayin'. Got a problem with  
that?

ZOOM  
Maybe. Maybe it depends on what  
you're prayin' for.

JOE  
Maybe a miracle.

ZOOM  
Maybe there's no such thing as  
miracles.

JOE  
And maybe there is. Maybe they  
happen all the time. Maybe miracles  
that happen all the time just don't  
seem like miracles anymore. Maybe  
that doesn't mean they're not...

ZOOM  
(looking away)  
Maybe it just means they don't  
happen around here...

Thirty seconds of nothing. Joe breaks it without looking at  
his boy:

JOE  
Son...

ZOOM  
Yeah...

JOE  
I'm gonna be needing some help in  
the morning...

ZOOM  
I'm on palooka patrol for Sonny  
tomorrow.

JOE  
It's a lot of stuff...

ZOOM  
Your man is depending on me.

JOE  
Well that's too bad...

ZOOM  
What's too bad?

JOE  
Too bad I can't...

Zoom immediately following this up with:

ZOOM  
THAT shit again.

The language draws a reproving look from Joe.

JOE

Well...when you're done you can  
mind the register and I'll put the  
stock up...

ZOOM

The register?! You know I don't  
know how the damn thing works!

JOE

You think you have to be a genius  
to work the counter at McDonald's?!  
You don't know how your TV works  
either! And you sure as hell don't  
know anything about the stock!

ZOOM

And that ain't about to change. Of  
all the record stores in  
Harlem...yours has to be the one  
that sells that...

Zoom looks away and speaks softly, almost under his breath:

ZOOM (cont'd)

(sotto voce)

...jiveass jungle bullshit.

JOE

BULLSHIT?!?! Where in the hell do  
you get off talking like that?!

(his voice rising)

You don't know what you're talking  
about! And what do you mean my  
store...it's OUR record store!

ZOOM

If it's my record store too, then  
why aren't we sellin' what I want?!

JOE

You wanna know why? It's because  
you don't know the business! You  
don't wanna know the business! And  
that's not the business I know!  
That bullshit I sell puts Big Macs  
in your big mouth and Air Jordans  
on your flat feet! You oughtta at  
least respect that!

Zoom sits back in his seat and crosses his arms.

ZOOM

Respect? What's there to respect?  
It's old...that stuff you  
sell...stale dated. This is America  
Dad...the twenty-first century. You  
can't carry the past around with  
you like that...

Now it's Joe's turn to look at Zoom that way.

They continue on in silence. Nothing but the roar of the  
subway.

FADE TO BLACK

EXT: HARLEM - 125TH STREET - NIGHT

Joe and Zoom enter a door next to CANA BRAVA RECORDS and  
ascend the stairs to an apartment over the store. Joe goes  
into the bathroom and pops a couple of aspirins. He splashes  
cold water on his face and looks at himself in the mirror --  
tired and lined. He towels off and steps out into the  
hallway.

Walking down the hall he passes an alcove with a prominently  
displayed AFRICAN MASK -- a face of RESOLUTE DIGNITY and  
CONTROLLED POWER. Barely perceptible,

AN EXTREMELY LOW BASE NOTE RESONATES UNDER THE SOUNDTRACK

Zoom's Knicks cap is carelessly slung up on a kind of  
HEADDRESS on top of the mask, hanging off to one side.

Joe is VISIBLY STARTLED. He stops and catches himself...and  
SLOWLY and GINGERLY and almost FEARFULLY he reaches up and  
removes the cap from its highly inappropriate resting place.

JOE

(addressing the mask)

Forgive him...please...he doesn't  
know...

He carries the cap to ZOOM'S ROOM, where Zoom is now sleeping  
with the VCR on -- a Jackie Chan movie playing. Joe turns the  
TV/VCR off and hangs the cap up on a peg in a wall covered  
with posters of basketball players, rappers, and MUHAMMAD  
ALI. On the dresser are several plastic models of military  
aircraft (including an Apache AH-64A Attack Helicopter).

Joe leaves, gently closing the door behind him.

FADE TO BLACK

INT: RHAKEEM'S RECORDS - THE NEXT MORNING

Zoom shoves the door open and walks into the record store. RHAKEEM himself presides behind the counter, HEAVY HIP-HOP PUMPING, Rhakeem's head bobbing back and forth as he chows down on chicken from a bucket. He looks up and sees Zoom enter.

RHAKEEM  
(licking his fingers)  
How ya doin' Zoom... How's the old  
man?

Zoom approaches the counter.

ZOOM  
Same...same as he ever was. You  
don't have to worry 'bout no  
competition there...

RHAKEEM  
(laughing good-naturedly)  
Competition?! Man's got his own  
crowd...

ZOOM  
Ain't no crowd bustin' down the  
door over there. An' anyway if they  
tried they'd be too old to break  
anything but a hip...

A DELIVERY MAN with a big box and a pissed-off expression enters, shoving his way through the door.

DELIVERY MAN  
Crazy motherfuckers! Like one ain't  
enough!

Rhakeem turns the music down while the Delivery Man sets the box on the floor.

RHAKEEM  
One what?

DELIVERY MAN  
Parade! I had to park three blocks  
away and carry this motherfucker!

Rhakeem casts a quick glance up at the wall calendar:

MARCH 17

FADE TO BLACK

A title burns in:

"A SALTY DOG"

EXT: 125TH STREET - DAY - BRASS MARCH MUSIC

SONNY GREENE fights his way down the crowded sidewalk, a fedora jauntily tipped forward on his head, a certain midsection ampleness preceding his passage. He's in his mid-fifties, with grey hair and a grey, jazzy-looking goatee. He's carrying a big package too.

He wants to cross the street, but he's got a problem.

He's abreast of a phalanx heralded by a big banner:

ST. MARY MAGDALEN'S PARISH WISHES HARLEM A HAPPY ST.  
PATRICK'S DAY!

It's now or never. He makes his move, but not quite soon enough. He finds himself shoved along the advance guard like a drum major, just ahead of a FOXY LADY.

CUT TO:

INT: RHAKEEM'S RECORDS

The Delivery Man is standing at the counter:

DELIVERY MAN  
Got one somewhere in the city  
almost every day of the goddamn  
year...

He holds out a clipboard for Rhakeem to sign...

DELIVERY MAN (cont'd)  
President's Day Parade, Purim  
Parade, Chinese New Year Parade,  
Greek Independence Day Parade,  
Hindu Parade, Hellenic Parade...

Rhakeem holds up ten greasy fingers, like in a stickup. He crooks one and points to a CLEANUP GUY mopping on the other side of the store.

RHAKEEM  
My man there'll get it for ya.

The Delivery Man crosses the room:

DELIVERY MAN (CONT'D)  
 ...April Fool's Day Parade,  
 Christmas Day Parade, Cuban Day  
 Parade, Israeli Day Parade, Gay  
 Freedom Day Parade, Turkish-  
 American Day Parade...

The Cleanup Guy stands his mop in the bucket and takes the clipboard from the Delivery Man.

DELIVERY MAN (cont'd)  
 ...Latinos Unidos Parade, Norwegian-  
 American Parade, Brooklyn Bridge  
 Day Parade, Flag Day Parade,  
 Lesbian and Gay Pride Parade...

He signs and hands it back.

DELIVERY MAN (cont'd)  
 ...Captive Nations Parade, Brooklyn  
 Pride Parade, Dominican Day Parade,  
 India Day Parade, Pakistan Day  
 Parade...

CUT BACK TO:

SONNY

He's looking at the Foxy Lady, a gleam in his eye. Gone Irish.

CUT BACK TO:

THE DELIVERY MAN

He's at the chicken bucket with Rhakeem, chawing on a drumstick, talking with his mouth full:

DELIVERY MAN (CONT'D)  
 ...Bronx Caribbean Cultural Parade,  
 Steuben Day Parade, Labor Day  
 Parade, African-American Day  
 Parade, United American-Muslim Day  
 Parade, Chinese National Day  
 Parade, West Indian American Day  
 Carnival Parade, Nigerian Parade,  
 Pulaski Day Parade, Hispanic  
 Columbus Day Parade, Jewish Pride  
 Parade, Greenwich Village Halloween  
 Parade...

CUT BACK TO:

SONNY

He plants a BIG KISS on the mouth of the Foxy Lady. She's shocked.

She whacks him.

FOXY LADY

What the hell do you think you're doing?!

Sonny points to her button:

KISS ME I'M IRISH!

FOXY LADY (cont'd)

Do you believe everything you read motherfucker?!!!

If looks could kill Sonny'd be toe-tagged. His gleam turns righteous.

SONNY

Let me ask you something...you obviously being a good Christian woman. If something is too good to be true...does that mean it has to be false?

He turns and moves on.

CUT BACK TO:

RHAKEEM'S

The Delivery Man is on his way out the door:

DELIVERY MAN (CONT'D)

...Ragamuffin Parade, Korean Harvest Day Parade, Macy's Thanksgiving Day Parade, and the goddamn Easter Parade!

(pause)

Thanks for the leg.

Rhakeem and Zoom look after him in amazement.

RHAKEEM

That guy must hate holidays...

ZOOM

And foreigners...

CUT BACK TO:

THE STREET

FOXY LADY

Hey!

Sonny spins around.

FOXY LADY (cont'd)

Only if it's a man!

She pulls a GREEN FLOWER from her lapel and tosses it to Sonny, who sticks it into his lapel while returning HER LOADED SMILE with one of his own. He makes it to the sidewalk on the other side of the street and continues on his way.

A couple of blocks down the street he passes the display window of Rhakeem's Records. He catches sight of Rhakeem in there and flashes him a thumbs-up, sharply returned by Rhakeem. He also catches a glimpse of Zoom hanging out in the shop.

CUT TO:

EXT. STREET - DAY - HARD AND HEAVY GANGSTA RAP

In a vacant lot bordering a building with POST NO BILLS painted prominently on the side, two young men are gluing up posters for a hip-hop show. The music we hear comes from a SUITCASE-SIZED TAPEPLAYER sitting on the ground beside them. They finish and move on.

On their way down the sidewalk, the POUNDING moving with them, they pass Sonny coming the other way. The Stedicam drops them and picks up on him. As the Gangstas recede in the distance the pounding recedes along with them, melding inharmoniously into the music of the parade.

Sonny gets to the vacant lot, sees the posters that have just gone up, and shakes his head in disgust:

SONNY

Fucking kids...

Exhaling deeply, he continues on and enters the store on the building's ground floor.

INT: CANA BRAVA RECORDS - CONTINUOUS

Joe is in there pulling CD's, tapes, records and musical instruments out of boxes. Stuff is scattered everywhere.

Sonny repeats:

SONNY

Fucking kids...

JOE  
 (looking up)  
 What's up Sonny? What's the  
 problem?

SONNY  
 You got posters up on the side of  
 the building again. Maybe they're  
 too dumb to read the sign. Maybe  
 you oughtta write it in some kind  
 of cartoon language.

JOE  
 You think they care? They'd paper  
 over their grandmothers'  
 tombstones. The only kind of  
 respect they know about is the kind  
 you give to someone who's tougher.  
 That's the kind chickens have. I'll  
 have Zoom take 'em down when he  
 gets back from your postering.

SONNY  
 My postering? I got the art right  
 here.

He thumps the package down on the counter.

SONNY (cont'd)  
 Your boy's stylin' at Rhakeem's. I  
 just saw him in there.

He does a few rap-style gestures and crosses his arms gangsta  
 style.

SONNY (cont'd)  
 (street)  
 Ya know what I mean?

Joe shakes his head balefully.

JOE  
 He's supposed to be at the bank.  
 That kid walked out of here with  
 almost two weeks receipts...

SONNY  
 That's something you do every day  
 Joe...

JOE  
 I know that! But I got work to do  
 in here! I don't have time to go  
 stand in line at the goddamn bank!

SONNY  
Well send Zoom!

JOE  
What the hell do you think I do!  
And you see what happens?!

SONNY  
Put a merda...

And he oughtta be helping you with that stuff too...isn't that right?

JOE  
(woundedly)  
Yeah... That's the whole point...

SONNY  
(turning to leave)  
Alright. I got some takin' care of to do. I'll be back around later with passes for you and the boys...

JOE  
I don't know if I'm up to it  
Sonny...

SONNY  
Everybody's up to something companheiro! We'll argue about it when I get back. Which is where your boy'll be real soon. Special delivery! Hasta la vista baby!

JOE  
(exhaling deeply)  
Hasta la vista old amigo...

Sonny leaves.

FADE TO BLACK

A title burns in:

"THAT WHICH WE CALL A ROSE"

INT: RHAKEEM'S RECORDS

Rhakeem is behind the counter. When he sees Sonny entering the shop he smiles broadly. Sonny hands a pass to Rhakeem and the two men trade high-fives and a handshake that ends with a one-handed snap of the fingers. There's an animated conversation that we aren't able to hear over the loud music, then --

Rhakeem lifts the tonearm from the record on the turntable, plunging the store into silence...

SONNY  
ZUMBI!!!

Zoom jerks around. Every other kid in the shop does the same, including the two Gangstas who postered Joe's building. All eyes flit between Sonny and Zoom.

ZOOM  
(softly, almost  
threateningly)  
That's not my name Sonny.

One of the Gangstas turns to the other:

GANGSTA 2  
Zumbi?!

SONNY  
Your name is what your parents call  
you boy...

Zoom thinks about it.

ZOOM  
It ain't on my birth certificate.

SONNY  
You think mine says "Sonny"?

Sonny turns to Rhakeem:

SONNY (cont'd)  
Hey Rhakeem! What's your birth  
certificate say?

RHAKEEM  
"Percival Pierce"! Right there over  
my mama's name!

The kids in the shop all crack up, all except for Zoom. Rhakeem's voice booms:

RHAKEEM (cont'd)  
WHAT'S YO' PROBLEM?!

The laughing cuts out immediately, except for some stifled snickering from the larger Gangsta 1.

RHAKEEM (cont'd)  
(kind of wounded)  
Good enough for Percy Sledge...  
good enough for me!

One of the kids in the shop looks at another:

KID  
Percy who?

Rhakeem overhears and chuckles, a little shake of his head, saying aside to Sonny:

RHAKEEM  
Older'n breakfast and they never  
heard of it...

Sonny gets down to business:

SONNY  
Alright Zoom! Why aren't you  
promotionalizing?

ZOOM  
You know that Sonny. That's not  
'til this afternoon...

SONNY  
Well your father told me different.  
While you've been relaxing in here  
he's been back at the shop doing a  
lot of heavy work.

Sonny looks pointedly at Zoom's skinny arms.

SONNY (cont'd)  
Maybe a little exercise wouldn't do  
you any harm.

A few of the kids snicker. Zoom looks upset.

SONNY (cont'd)  
The posters are waitin' for you  
back at the shop. And some asshole  
stuck promo up on the side of the  
building again. Tear that shit down  
and clean it up.

The PERPETRATORS look at each other.

Zoom turns away from Sonny and leans back on the bin, resuming his interrupted conversation -- gesturing homeboy style.

SONNY (cont'd)  
ZUMBI!!!

Zoom tugs the bag slung over his shoulder up a little tighter.

ZOOM

Yeah.

RHAKEEM

Stragglers ain't welcome here.

Zoom looks at Rhakeem like he's gone over to the enemy. He turns in an attitudinal way and sullenly swaggers out of the store.

The Gangstas look at each other, Gangsta 1 giving his head the slightest hint of a tilt in the direction of the door. Gangsta 2 hangs for a few seconds, then nonchalantly heads out as well.

Rhakeem turns to Sonny:

RHAKEEM (cont'd)

Maybe you were a little tough on him...

SONNY

Well what am I gonna do? If he doesn't start pullin' his weight then pretty soon somebody's gonna have to start shovin' it into place...

RHAKEEM

Yeah... But I mean that name business. Look at us...Wilson and Percival. Where do we get off? Sounds like we're butlers...or boyfriends...

SONNY

Or both!

RHAKEEM

(stung)

Ooh!

SONNY

But it ain't the same. We got historical precedent to back us up. Take Sugar Ray Robinson. You got any idea what his real name was?

RHAKEEM

(shrug)

Ray Robinson?

SONNY

Walker Smith. Tell me that don't sound like a fifth huggin' a thirty-eight...an' I ain't talkin' about tits. Nothin' sweet about it. And the toughest sonofabitch to ever come out of a tough state...Jersey Joe Walcott. The only thing that ever stopped him was Rocky Marciano's right hand. A lucky shot. Got any idea what his real name was?

Another shrug.

SONNY (cont'd)

Arnold Cream.

RHAKEEM

DAMN! He should've gotten whupped just for bein' born...

SONNY

An' what about the greatest?

RHAKEEM

Muhammad Ali?

SONNY

JOE LOUIS!!! The Brown Bomber! Louis was his middle name. His real name was Joe Louis Barrow. Now what was the problem with "Barrow"? And come to think of it...what was the problem with "Black"? The Black Bomber!

RHAKEEM

Yeah! That's some pretty heavy sounding shit!

SONNY

Too heavy for them times. But look...the way I see it...there's a difference here. It's one thing if you don't like the way a name sounds, or what it stands for. But it's somethin' else if you don't like a name because what it stands for...is you.

Rhakeem pulls up an old 45 rpm vinyl and holds it aloft:

RHAKEEM

Amen.

He throws it on the turntable and lowers the tonearm. A song from an era of different technical recording values fills the store, Johnny Wakelin & The Kinshasa Band's --

BLACK SUPERMAN - MUHAMMAD ALI

This here's the story of Cassius Clay  
 Who changed his name to Muhammad Ali  
 He knows how to talk and he knows how to fight  
 And all the contenders were beat out of sight  
 Sing, Muhammad, Muhammad Ali  
 He floats like a butterfly and stings like a bee  
 Muhammad, the Black Superman  
 Who calls to the other guy I'm Ali catch me if you can...

A loud obnoxious voice:

GANGSTA 1

YO!!! That shit ain't fresh!!!

Rhakeem cuts the music and gives the guy a serious look.

RHAKEEM

Chill my friend. I decide what's  
 fresh around here.

To Sonny:

RHAKEEM (cont'd)

Like the ugly hole he communicates  
 through...

Rhakeem pulls up a CD:

RHAKEEM (cont'd)

Now...check this out. Tell me if it  
 don't make you hard.

He pops it into the player. A badass hard-pumpin' remake, with a few changes. Rhakeem shuffles, jabs, and grooves.

NEW CD

This here's the story of Cassius Clay  
 Who changed his name to Muhammad Ali  
 He knows how to talk and he knows how to fight  
 And all the contenders say he's out of sight  
 Sing, Muhammad, Muhammad Ali  
 Floated like a butterfly and stung like a bee  
 Muhammad, the Black Superman  
 Who called to the other guy I'm Ali catch me if you can  
 Now all you fight fans, you've got to agree  
 They all were afraid of Muhammad Ali  
 He filled the arenas wherever he went  
 And that ticket money was dollars well spent  
 Muhammad, is known to have said  
 You watch me shuffle and I'll jab off your head  
 He moved like the Black Superman

And called to the other guy I'm Ali catch me if you can  
 He said I'm the greatest the world's ever seen  
 The heavyweight champion who came back again  
 My face is so pretty you don't see a scar  
 Which proves I'm the king of the ring by far...

Rhakeem fades it down.

SONNY

History...

Rhakeem shakes his head in polite disagreement.

RHAKEEM

Science... Sweet science...

OUTSIDE, visible through the store's big display window, a  
 WINO TYPE makes his unsteady way along the sidewalk.

An idle glance into the shop and he halts. He backtracks and  
 enters.

Rhakeem removes the Black Superman CD and sets it on the  
 counter while keeping his eyes trained on:

MELVIS

Hey Sonny! Buddy!

Melvis lowers his voice and speaks imploringly:

Listen...Sonny... I'm kinda short right now. Could ya spot me  
 something for a sandwich?

SONNY

(reaching into his  
 pocket)

Alright Melvis. Just don't drop it  
 and get the brown bag all wet.

MELVIS

I'll always be there for you Sonny.  
 You know that.

SONNY

Yeah. I'd sure love to find out who  
 I caught you from.

Melvis looks hurt.

SONNY (cont'd)

Just kiddin' Melvis. You be  
 careful.

MELVIS

Right Sonny... Careful...

Turning to leave, Melvis steadies himself on a CD rack, knocking CD's all over the place. He doesn't seem to notice. He walks blithely, albeit unsteadily, out the door.

Rhakeem shakes his head in disapproval. He steps out from behind the counter, heading for the mess. Sonny rushes to help.

RHAKEEM

That man's put the touch on you for so long I'm startin' to think you get off on it.

SONNY

Old times Rhakeem. They count. Melvis and I did the merchant marine together...all over the world. We picked up some habits. My taste ran to muchachas. He went in for the muscatel.

GANGSTA 1 idly checks out the CD that Rhakeem had left on the counter.

RHAKEEM and SONNY pick up CD's.

FADE TO BLACK

A title burns in:

"WAR"

EXT: A HARLEM STREET - A LITTLE LATER

Zoom is on his way down the sidewalk with a bucket, a brush, and the package of posters.

He does a couple of corners and doubles back down the other side of the street.

He stops cold in his tracks. The posters that he'd put up just minutes before have been covered over, already.

Going to take a closer look he steps in front of a PASSING CAB.

The cab BRAKES AND SWERVES, tires squealing, cabbie SCREAMING and CURSING in Hindi, his TURBANED HEAD thrust out the window.

Zoom yells back:

ZOOM

TRY ENGLISH... RAGHEAD!!!

He crosses the street. The posters covering Sonny's are identical to the ones that Sonny had told him to take down. And they haven't been thrown up haphazardly. They neatly cover Sonny's, and nobody else's.

He hustles down to the next site. Same thing.

He practically runs to the next site. Same thing.

Zoom neatly covers all the posters covering Sonny's.

MATCH FADE TO:

Zoom covering another group of offending posters.

MATCH FADE TO:

Zoom covering yet another group of offending posters.

DISSOLVE TO:

Zoom coming around a corner and looking across the street to the first site he re-covered.

Those posters have been covered over.

Crossing the street (stopping to look both ways first) he covers the posters covering Sonny's covering the posters covering Sonny's.

He works his way toward the next CORNER.

AERIAL SHOT: Visible from this perspective, AROUND that corner, GANGSTAS are postering, working THEIR way towards the corner on a collision course with Zoom.

GANGSTA RAP FROM THE SUITCASE-SIZED TAPEPLAYER HEARD EARLIER

As the gang gets CLOSER and CLOSER to the corner - to Zoom - the music gets LOUDER and LOUDER, and MEANER and MEANER.

EXT: CORNER - GROUND LEVEL - CONTINUOUS

The ANTAGONISTS walk into each other, Zoom's nose right into Gangsta 1's chest. Surprise.

GANGSTA 1  
Hello Zumbi.

ZOOM  
That's not my name...

GANGSTA 1  
Whatever people call ya...that's your name.

It ain't exactly Jones...is it.

GANGSTA 2  
Or Jordan... or Johnson...

GANGSTA 3  
Or Jackson...

There is a LITTLE RESTAURANT on the corner: AUNT CECILIA'S CARIBBEAN KITCHEN.

AUNT CECILIA herself, an enormous woman in a tentlike muumuu of brightly colored fabric, steps out:

AUNT CECILIA  
(strong Jamaican accent)  
Back off rude boys! An' if you aren't as stupid as it looks like you are you'll watch where you're goin'! 'Cause when you back up far enough you're gonna cross a line. An' Jones an' Jordan an' Johnson an' Jackson gonna be Kudu an' Kwame an' Kojo an' goddamn Kunta Kinte!

GANGSTA 1  
Barnum and Bailey give you a license to set yo' bigtop up on our corner?

The gang cracks up.

AUNT CECILIA  
Your corner! I been on this corner for twenty-five years... rude boy!

GANGSTA 1  
Well how come Two Tons o' Fun? No such thing as round-trip for rafts? Or maybe they was afraid you'd swamp the boat!!!

The gang cracks up again and Gangsta 1's look of hard humor turns back to Zoom. Zoom takes a step backward.

ZOOM  
The only island I ever been on is the one we're on right now...

GANGSTA 1  
So you're halfway homeboy...

AUNT CECILIA  
That's how it is Zoom? Well maybe it's a good thing you do live here.  
(MORE)

AUNT CECILIA(cont'd)

'Cause if they can ever transplant  
a backbone into somebody it'll  
probably happen here first!

She turns the sign inside the restaurant door from OPEN to CLOSED, slams the door shut, locks it, and leaves, shoving her way through the Gangstas impeding her passage.

Gangst 1 pulls Sonny's posters from Zoom's hands and heaves them into the street.

He forces the gang's posters onto Zoom.

GANGSTA 1

I want these up...all of them...a  
good job...you understandin' me?

ZOOM

I like my asshole the size it is.  
Go fuck with somebody else.

Zoom is immediately pinned up hard against the wall, legs dangling, Gangsta 1's hand wrapped around his throat.

GANGSTA 1

Why? Are you a cowboy?

No reply.

GANGSTA 1 (cont'd)

I said...ARE YOU A COWBOY?

Zoom painfully shakes his head no.

GANGSTA 1 (cont'd)

Then I guess you must be the cow  
GIRL.

Zoom's fly is opened, his jeans yanked down. He's turned around roughly, shoved over, bare ass out, held tight.

Gangsta 1 picks up one of Sonny's posters and rolls it into a TUBE with a point at one end.

GANGSTA 1 (cont'd)

Cherry...

Zoom's mark is about to be met when an EXPLOSION sends GANGSTAS SCATTERING LIKE BOWLING PINS. It's Aunt Cecilia with a VENGEANCE. A flying rear tackle. She picks herself up and starts SWINGING HER PURSE. Gangsta 1 takes it on the jaw.

GANGSTA 1 (cont'd)

Ooh bitch...you goin' under!  
(an order)  
Glue that orca to the ground!

Gangstas secure Aunt Cecilia by arms and legs. She's spread eagle in front of Zoom, who is practically poised over her, bare thighs and skewed BVD's.

Gangsta 1 is looking at Zoom.

GANGSTA 1 (cont'd)  
You ever see what a blowhole looks like?

The Gangsta looks from Zoom to Aunt Cecilia and back.

GANGSTA 1 (cont'd)  
Well you ain't that lucky today.

He brandishes the tube, uses it as a pointer.

GANGSTA 1 (cont'd)  
Pick'em up.

This time Zoom obeys.

GANGSTA 1 (cont'd)  
Now get to work...an' do it right.  
An' listen to me carefully. I know where you an' your spick old man live. I know where you do your business. Do you understand what I'm sayin' to you?

Zoom nods his head in assent.

GANGSTA 1 (cont'd)  
(with a jump to frighten Zoom)

GIT!

Zoom grabs up the bucket and scuttles away, wrenching his pants up as he goes. He can hear Aunt Cecilia's cries.

Down the street a ways he stops to look back.

A VOICE (OC)  
She went back to help you...

Zoom standing in front of the HARLEM HOUSE OF SAINTS. The SHOP SIGN is in the form of an AFRICAN MASK. The mask has an HEADPIECE resembling the one on the mask back in the apartment, the one used by Zoom as a hatrack.

From a window over the shop an ANCIENT CRONE glares down at Zoom. She looks like she could be a hundred and twenty years old.

Zoom stumbles on.

A few blocks further down he sets the bucket on the sidewalk and starts postering.

FADE TO BLACK

A title burns in:

"A MORE GRACIOUS AGE"

INT: CANA BRAVA RECORDS - DAY

Zoom walks into the store. There are several OLD RASCALS in there with a bummed-out looking Joe. A FAT Old Rascal is busy stringing something that looks like a ukulele.

Zoom's arrival knocks the men's rapid chatter into dead silence.

They look at him like he's a zoo specimen.

His face is ready to crack.

ZOOM

There was nothin' I could do.

JOE

What the hell are you talkin' about...?

Sonny's stuff?

ZOOM

Yeah?

JOE

Well then how about doin' some of this stuff too!

Zoom can live with it. He grabs a few things and climbs the ladder.

AN OLD RASCAL

(to the Fat Old Rascal)

Why do you always have to be takin' so long?

FAT OLD RASCAL

Easy mano! You're startin' to talk like your sister!

OLD RASCAL

That so? How would you know?

FAT OLD RASCAL

Same way everybody else does.

He tunes a string up to pitch. Twaaaaaaaaaang.

Another RASCAL has just fired up a DOUBLE CORONA.

JOE

Hey! What the hell do you think you're doin'! You can't smoke in here!

CHARUTO

What's the problem mano? It's Cuban!

JOE

I don't care if Bill Clinton gave it to you! One of you is going out!

Joe spins an ashtray down the counter.

CHARUTO

This is like tellin' me to pull my dick out before I'm done!

JOE

Sometimes you gotta do that when you're in another man's place.

The THUMPS OF THE CIGAR BEING EXTINGUISHED resound through the display case-cum-soundboard.

TEST CHORDS from the Fat Old Rascal, following the rhythm of the cigar, while --

ANOTHER RASCAL is pulling an ACOUSTIC GUITAR down from a wallrack, inadvertently knocking several other displayed items down as he does so.

Joe gives the guy the HARD STARE.

FLACO

Mano! Cool it! You look like you're seein' a ghost!

JOE

That's what you're gonna BE if you break anything!

FLACO

I thought it was you break it you buy it.

JOE

That only works for people with money.

The REMAINING RASCALS are HELPING THEMSELVES to instruments as well.

JOE (cont'd)  
 Hey! Where the hell do you guys  
 think you are?!

A little CACAPHONOUS TUNING and a few RANDOM PERCUSSION  
 POPS...

JOE (cont'd)  
 This ain't the Apollo Theater you  
 know.

...evolve into a SAMBA WITH A BEAUTIFUL FLOWING MELODY.

FAT OLD RASCAL  
 No Mano... It's the Copacabana  
 Palace!

[Music: SAMBA DE ORFEU, from the soundtrack to BLACK ORPHEUS  
 (1959)]

The SHOP DOOR OPENS and in waltzes Sonny with a carton of  
 Chinese carryout. He tilts his hat even further forward than  
 usual, rakish, and begins DANCING around the shop with the  
 food to his belly and the other held out as if he were  
 accompanying the ghost of Carmen Miranda.

Until he sees a REAL WOMAN strolling by. Dark-haired, bright  
 red lipstick, a red dress stretched tight over a big bust and  
 wide hips.

Sonny THROWS the door open and PULLS the woman in by the arm,  
 tossing the carryout onto the counter and tipping his hat.

SONNY  
 ROSA MARIA!!!

ROSA MARIA  
 (smiling widely, speaking  
 with a strong Spanish  
 accent)  
 Why Sonny! You beautiful old man!

Sonny does a few fast and complicated steps.

SONNY  
 Who's old?

ROSA MARIA  
 (with smiling  
 graciousness)  
 You are Sonny! But you're not too  
 old for me!

And they come together like Fred and Ginger, moving with sly  
 and sultry elegance around that little record store. Zoom  
 watches from the top of the ladder (gimme a fuckin' break!).

The song is wound up with laughter and chatter and Sonny handing around passes.

FAT OLD RASCAL

(looking up to the top of  
the ladder)

Eh Zoom? They don't make 'em like  
that anymore! Do they!

ZOOM

But haven't you heard? This is the  
twenty-first century. Nobody beats  
drums anymore. We got machines for  
that...

The Rascals laugh and shake their heads (these kids nowadays!), putting the instruments back more or less where they found them.

Rosa Maria still hasn't let go of Sonny. She picks a bit of wonton out of his moustache.

ROSA MARIA

Oh Sonny... Aren't you ever gonna  
get tired of eating leftovers and  
carryout?

SONNY

Well... that way I don't have to  
wash any dishes Rosa...

ROSA MARIA

But if I cooked for you...you  
wouldn't have any dishes to wash...

SONNY

Rosa...you know I love your  
cooking. But if you cooked for me  
all the time I'd get too fat...

ROSA MARIA

No you wouldn't Sonny. I wouldn't  
let you.

SONNY

How's that Rosa? What would you do  
about it?

ROSA MARIA

(coquettishly)

Well...I'd always make your bed the  
next morning...

SONNY

(long sufferingly)

Rosa...

ROSA MARIA

...and no more pickin' out your shirts by sniffin' for the cleanest one Sonny. No more biological experiments in the refrigerator...

SONNY

But I'm used to living that way Rosa...

ROSA MARIA

You don't have to be Sonny. What's wrong with two toothbrushes in the glass by the sink? Two towels on the towelrack? You'd get used to that. Saturday nights aren't so bad, are they?

SONNY

But that's only one night a week Rosa...

ROSA MARIA

But it's the best night of the week...isn't it Sonny?

SONNY

You got me there Rosa. It sure is...

(pause)

But you know what they say about too much of a good thing...

ROSA MARIA

Yeah! Too much ain't enough! See ya Saturday...hombre. All of ya!

She tweaks him playfully, down there, and heads out the door with the departing Rascals, taking time to stop and turn and blow a kiss as she goes.

Sonny shakes his head (what am I gonna do with her?). He looks up the ladder:

SONNY

So Zoom...how'd it go?

ZOOM

Same as always. You glue 'em up and hope there aren't too many other glue crews working the area... you know...

SONNY

Yeah I do. That's good. It oughtta be a good night and a hard fight.

He extends a pass to Joe.

JOE  
I can't Sonny...

SONNY  
Sure ya can Joe.

JOE  
I got things to take care of.

SONNY  
Sure you do Joe. They'll still be there tomorrow...

JOE  
Yeah...but what I need to take care of 'em with won't. I got robbed this afternoon Sonny. This stuff isn't paid for. I don't have long-term credit.

He looks bad. Sonny looks up to Zoom at the top of the ladder.

Their eyes meet.

BANG!

It's Joe, eyes clinched shut, hand to his forehead. Sonny rushes over.

SONNY  
What's the matter Joe? You alright?

JOE  
I'm okay. Just a little dizzy's all.

SONNY  
Joe... It can be tough to take it easy. But sometimes you gotta take some time off. I'll help you with the money. Let's do something different tomorrow...

JOE  
I'd like to Sonny. But this place's gotta stay open.

Sonny spins around and looks back up to Zoom on his perch.

SONNY  
Zoom! You're here in the shop tomorrow!

ZOOM

Who do you think you are tellin' me  
what to do Sonny?

Sonny is livid.

SONNY

DON'T GIVE ME YOUR SHIT ZOOM! I'VE  
HAD ENOUGH OF IT! You think Rhakeem  
doesn't pick up on what you say  
while you're hanging around over  
there?! You think I don't hear it?!

Zoom doesn't respond.

SONNY (cont'd)

(to Joe)

You take it easy tonight and we're  
gone in the morning. We'll catch a  
movie or something. Eat lunch out.  
Sit in the park and watch the girls  
go by. Subway fare's on me! And  
I'll be around tonight after the  
fight for Colonel Sander's and TV.  
It's a date! Hasta la vista baby!

He exits into the waning evening light.

A title burns in:

"YORUBAN YELLS ON AMERICAN CABLE"

INT. THE APARTMENT OVER THE RECORD STORE - NIGHT

Joe and Sonny sit on the living room couch watching I LOVE  
LUCY.

CUT TO:

ZOOM'S ROOM

Zoom's stretched out on his bed watching a Jackie Chan movie.  
He can hear RICKY and LUCY arguing on the TV out in the  
living room.

CUT BACK TO:

THE LIVING ROOM

PAN to the TV screen. Ricky Ricardo is playing his drum.

FULL SCREEN SHOT OF TV

Ricky shouts:

RICKY RICARDO

BABALOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOO!!!

CUT BACK TO:

ZOOM IN HIS ROOM

He points the remote at the VCR and Jackie Chan comes up loud, drowning out the offending sitcom.

FADE TO BLACK

INT: CANA BRAVA RECORDS - THE NEXT DAY - HEAVY HIP-HOP

Zoom sits behind the counter, a Rhakeem clone (shades, head bopping to the beat, burgers from a bag).

TWO MEN in business suits, ritual scars on their cheeks, enter the store. One of them approaches the counter and asks Zoom a question. Zoom can't hear the guy over the LOUD MUSIC.

He looks at the guy like the guy's stupid. He makes no move to turn the music down.

The man asks again, to no avail.

EXT: CANA BRAVA RECORDS - CONTINUOUS

The man exits and cranes his neck to look up at the sign.

He re-enters.

INT: CANA BRAVA RECORDS - CONTINUOUS

He walks back to the counter.

AFRICAN 1

(we can see him mouthing  
the words)

Excuse me!

Zoom looks at him with a cowlike expression. The man repeats himself several times until Zoom finally deigns to humor him.

AFRICAN 1 (cont'd)

Thank you!

(looking to his colleague)

Yes!

(back to Zoom)

We've been newly posted to our  
country's consulate here...and  
we're having a party in order to  
get to know the rest of the staff.  
We're looking for music. We were  
told that you might be helpful...

Zoom shrugs.

The owner! Maybe he'd...

ZOOM  
(cutting the guy off)  
He's not here.

AFRICAN 1  
Well then...can we have a look  
around?

ZOOM  
Help yourself.

African 2 has already been doing so. He calls African 1 over to show him what he's found. A rapid conversation in their own language and African 1 takes the CD up to Zoom.

AFRICAN 1  
Would you be so kind as to play the  
first cut...please?

Zoom sourly acquiesces...

And TSHALA MUANA'S smoky voice and the tripping rhythms of her native ground fill the air. The two men LAUGH IN EXULTATION and playfully DANCE A TRIBAL DANCE that looks like it probably hasn't changed in ten thousand years.

Zoom is ready to throw up.

Visible through the display window: Several of the KIDS who'd been hanging at Rhakeem's are lounging out in front of the store. One of them points to Zoom.

OUT cuts Tshala and IN cuts hip-hop. The MEN STOP DANCING and turn to look puzzledly at Zoom. He's bobbing to the beat like he's been doing it all day.

AFRICAN 1 (cont'd)  
Well...we'll take that one. And  
there are several others we'd like  
to hear as well.

A DELIVERY TRUCK pulls up out front.

ZOOM  
I can't. There's a problem with the  
sound system.

AFRICAN 1  
It sounds okay to me...

ZOOM  
 (turning away, under his  
 breath)  
 That's 'cause it ain't playin' your  
 shit.

African 1 cocks his head a little, wondering if he heard  
 right.

The door opens and the DELIVERY MAN enters carrying a box.  
 It's our friend from Rhakeem's.

AFRICAN 1  
 I see...

The Delivery Man sets the box on the floor and extends the  
 clipboard for Zoom's signature. A catchupy finger indicates  
 one of the kids out front.

ZOOM  
 My man out there'll get it for you.

The Delivery Man looks out dubiously.

DELIVERY MAN  
 Which one?

ZOOM  
 The ugly one.

DELIVERY MAN  
 They're all ugly.

Zoom waves out the window to get the attention of the KID  
 he's talking about. He gestures that he wants the Kid to  
 sign.

The Kid points to himself (who me?). Zoom indicates "yes"  
 with a thumbs-up. The Kid doesn't return it, but he signs  
 anyway.

AFRICAN 1  
 Your shop was highly recommended.  
 For my part...it certainly won't  
 be.

AFRICAN 2  
 Nor mine either.

On their way out the door,

SONNY BURSTS IN, almost knocking them over.

Zoom hits the switch on the amplifier and TSHALA MUANA kicks  
 back in, but Sonny isn't fooled or placated.

SONNY  
SONOFABITCH ZOOM! What are you  
trying to do here?

He approaches and stands directly in front of Zoom. His  
customary flair is gone.

ZOOM  
I'm fucking sick and tired of  
hearing you call me that Sonny...

He hits the switch and TSHALA MUANA becomes hip-hop again.

SONNY  
(shakily, but with the  
force of anger)  
No Zoom. You're ASHAMED. You're  
ASHAMED of your father. You're  
ASHAMED of where he comes from and  
of what that makes you.

What would he THINK if he could see what you're doing in here  
right now?

ZOOM  
Well then maybe it's a good thing  
he's not here Sonny...

SONNY  
NO Zoom. It's NOT a good thing.  
It's NOT a good thing at all. He's  
had a stroke. He's in the hospital.  
He's in bad shape. He might die...

Zoom drains. He turns off the music and collapses into a  
chair behind the counter.

SONNY (cont'd)  
He needs you more now than he ever  
has before Zoom. Come on. Let's go.

Zoom grabs keys and cash from the drawer. He locks the shop  
door and pulls down and locks the metal shutter while Sonny  
hails a cab.

Sonny and Zoom climb in.

INT: CAB - CONTINUOUS

SONNY  
Metropolitan! Ninety-seventh and  
First! Get us there fast! It's an  
emergency!

CABBIE  
(very heavily accented  
English)  
Yes sir. I'll do my best sir.

Zoom looks at the DRIVER. It's the Turbaned Fellow who almost ran him down the day before.

THE CAB accelerates into the traffic.

INT: THE HOSPITAL

Zoom and Sonny are talking with JOE'S DOCTOR.

DOCTOR  
Your father's had a stroke Zoom. Do you know what that means?

ZOOM  
Yeah. That's something that happens to old people...

DOCTOR  
It's more common in older people...but it can happen at any age. A stroke like your father's happens when a blood vessel in the brain bursts. The area around the vessel is damaged. In your father's case we still don't know the full extent. We're running tests right now.

ZOOM  
What's gonna happen?

DOCTOR  
We don't know. Strokes are mysterious. The brain doesn't heal like other parts of the body. Functions lost in one area can be taken over by other, undamaged areas, but this process isn't clear...and it depends on factors that aren't easy to identify. The mind can both destroy...and heal. The first has already happened to your father. We can hope for the other. Do you understand what I'm saying?

ZOOM  
Not really...

DOCTOR

Your father has suffered repeated incidents of high blood pressure due to stress. In talking with Sonny it seems that your father's greatest concerns were you...and his own father.

ZOOM

His father? His father's been dead for years...

SONNY

No Zoom. He's alive. He is very much alive.

DOCTOR

I have rounds to make. You can see your father after he's gone into intensive care. That'll be in a couple of hours or so. But it's very important for you to understand that doctors can only deliver the science. It's up to you to deliver the magic.

She leaves.

SONNY

They call him Gato... the Cat.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT: HOSPITAL CAFETERIA

It's almost deserted, the atmosphere subdued.

ZOOM

I don't get it. Why would Dad lead me to believe his father was dead?

SONNY

Did he tell you that?

ZOOM

He never said a word.

SONNY

Did you ever ask?

Zoom's answer is a slight shrug.

SONNY (cont'd)

It was like this Zoom. Your father is Joe here. But before he left home his name was Jorge.

(MORE)

SONNY(cont'd)

Your mother was pregnant with you. Things are different where he comes from. It was a tough life. He wanted to give his child a chance for something better.

ZOOM

By moving to Harlem?!

SONNY

You don't know what he came out of. He wanted Gato to come too. But Gato refused. And he never forgave Joe for leaving.

ZOOM

Well what was the problem? Doesn't sound like there was a whole lot to leave.

SONNY

There was the past...and the future. They were both there for your grandfather until your father left and took your mother... and you... with him.

ZOOM

But the past is gone. And the future is out there.

SONNY

Not to a man like Gato. The past lives in him. And you were the future.

ZOOM

I don't have anything to do with this!

SONNY

Yes you do Zoom. You have everything to do with it. Your father was the first in generations of your family to leave. It meant breaking with his own father and almost twenty years of suffering because of it. He did it for you. And you were laughing at everything he gave up.

ZOOM

(almost inaudibly)

So I put him into that hospital bed...

SONNY  
I didn't mean it like that Zoom.

ZOOM  
You didn't have to.

Absolute quiet...

ZOOM (cont'd)  
If my father can't go to his  
father...then his father will have  
to come to him.

SONNY  
He won't.

ZOOM  
It's the only way Sonny. There is  
no other way. If you know of  
one...you tell me what it is.

SONNY  
What I'm telling you is it's  
impossible. You can't just call him  
up.

ZOOM  
Then I'll go. I'll get him. And  
I'll bring him back. It's a simple  
as that Sonny.

Zoom stands up and puts on his jacket.

SONNY  
Where you goin'?

ZOOM  
I gotta tell somebody something.

He leaves Sonny sitting alone at the table.

CUT TO:

EXT: 125TH STREET - NIGHT

Zoom arrives outside Aunt Cecilia's Caribbean Kitchen. He pauses for a few moments before entering. There's a LONE CUSTOMER in the place, facing away. Aunt Cecilia sits in the corner, bruised and despondent and angry looking. When she sees Zoom she looks at him with HATRED IN HER EYES. She says nothing.

Zoom steps up to her:

ZOOM

You said something about a line  
yesterday. One was drawn. I  
should've crossed it and I didn't.  
Now all of a sudden it's behind me  
and I don't see how I can get back.

(pause)

I guess you've been there. I'm  
sorry...

Aunt Cecilia looks away -- her jaw set. The Lone Customer  
turns around in her seat. It's the Ancient Crone from the  
balcony.

She caws:

CRONE

Do you know what makes a person  
strong?

Zoom looks at her. He vaguely shakes his head no.

CRONE (cont'd)

Being strong for somebody else...

She goes back to her soup. Aunt Cecilia continues to look  
away. Zoom says nothing. He leaves the restaurant.

INT: THE HOSPITAL - NIGHT

Zoom stands at the side of his father's hospital bed, the  
machinery keeping his father alive softly clicking and  
whirring. Zoom's hand rests upon his father's.

ZOOM

(very gently)

Dad...your father's coming. I'm  
bringing him. You promise me you'll  
wait. I won't let you down. I'm  
promising you...

He lifts his father's hand and kisses it. If Joe is aware he  
is not able to show it.

SLOW FADE TO:

INT: THE APARTMENT

Zoom sits on the edge of his bed. Through the open bedroom  
door we can see the mask in the hallway.

ZOOM

help me...

CUT TO:

## A CAB ON THE BQE

Zoom and Sonny are on their way to the airport.

SONNY

Zoom. What do you know about Einstein and relativity?

ZOOM

I know "E" equals "M" "C" square.

SONNY

And what does that mean to you?

ZOOM

Not a whole hell of a lot to tell you the truth.

SONNY

Well let me tell you...it's got a whole hell of a lot to do with the truth. It means that where you're looking at things from has a whole hell of a lot to do with what truth is. Are you following me?

ZOOM

From about half a mile back there.

SONNY

Zoom...you know your father didn't grow up in Disneyland...

ZOOM

I didn't exactly grow up in Beverly Hills Sonny.

SONNY

Yeah...but you seen it on TV.

Pause...

SONNY (cont'd)

What do you know about the south side?

ZOOM

Of Beverly Hills?

SONNY

Of the planet!

ZOOM

'Bout as much as I know about Einstein and relativity.

SONNY

That's what I figured. Now there's something you gotta remember. If you wanna convince somebody to do something...you gotta be able to see things from their point-of-view. That's the only way to understand them well enough to know why they'd wanna say no.

ZOOM

Are you talking about using Albert Einstein to get laid?

SONNY

That'd be better than using him to build bombs, wouldn't it? But no...what I'm tellin' you is you gotta get onto your grandfather's wavelength.

ZOOM

Maybe his channel's the one that needs changin'...

SONNY

And you wanna try pushin' the button? He'll knock you off the air faster than Pee Wee Herman.

ZOOM

How's an old man gonna do that?

SONNY

Ask George Foreman.

Sonny looks away. Zoom watches Sonny for a few moments and then turns to look out the window at the passing view of Queens.

Bare trees and industry.

INT: A CROWDED DEPARTURE TERMINAL AT KENNEDY AIRPORT

Zoom is ready to pass through the security gate. Awkward silence. A couple of ATTRACTIVE YOUNG WOMEN in tight jeans pass by and Sonny looks after them.

SONNY

(trying to lighten things  
up)  
Nice asses...

ZOOM

Be careful Sonny. This is America!  
You can get sued for that!

SONNY

For havin' a sweet backyard?!

ZOOM

No. For lookin' like you're ready to climb the fence to get in.

SONNY

Don't act like such a saint. You'll be reachin' for the wire cutters soon enough. You're on your way to the backyard capitol of the world! Hasta la vista baby...and good luck!

ZOOM

Yeah... Good luck to us all...

Zoom turns and walks through the security gate. Sonny watches after him, then turns and starts to walk away. He catches himself, turns back, and yells:

SONNY

ZOOM!

Zoom looks around. Sonny reaches into his pocket and pulls out a business card. He folds it into eighths and tosses it to Zoom.

SONNY (cont'd)

CALL ME WHEN YOU GET  
THERE...COLLECT!

Zoom shoves the card into his pocket, waves in affirmation, and continues on his way. Sonny looks after him for a moment, then turns and leaves.

EXT: A 747 TAXIING OUT ON THE RUNWAY - FADING INTO NIGHT

A cold wind whips a dusting of snow across the concrete, twisting and snaking.

CUT TO:

Zoom inside the plane, in a window seat on the right side. He's looking out the window.

CUT TO:

The JUMBO JET revving up and taking off, hurtling down the runway. It lifts into the cold air, beacons flashing, climbing into an almost dark sky. It banks to the right.

CUT TO:

Zoom looking out the window at the STATUE OF LIBERTY, bright in the floodlights.

CUT TO:

The PLANE continuing to climb into the darkness. Now it's small in the distance.

FADE TO  
EXTENDED BLACK

The sound of JET ENGINES slowly metamorphoses into the sound of BREAKING WAVES...

FADE IN:

EXT. A BEACH - DAY

A LITTLE GIRL

We see her from above. She fills the screen. She has RIBBONS in her hair -- of various colors.

SHE'S SUNNING HERSELF ON A BEACH, eyes closed, supine on a bright sarong. Her sandals, new and pretty in a cheap way, are neatly placed at her side.

A WAVE FALLS and water slides frothing up the sand, up past the girl, soaking her. Her eyes JERK OPEN IN WIDE SURPRISE and she leaps up fumbling to rescue her things. As the wash recedes it carries her sandals along with it down into the water.

Working frantically she gathers up the soaked sarong and tosses it higher up onto the beach. Then she heads out into the surf after her sandals.

She finds one buoying on the waves and grabs it. Standing waist deep, buffeted by rough water, she looks around for the other, turning this way and that. It's not there. Nothing but spray and foam. Finally, making a face like (DARN!), she gives up.

She wades up out of the water, puts on her one sandal, picks up her sarong, and heads for home, clopping her off-balanced way down the sidewalk to --

EXT: THE BUS STOP

Where a MOTLEY CROWD OF KIDS up from the beach and worse for the wear already waits. The Little Girl melds into the confusion as a BUS pulls up.

The kids CLAMOR and SHOVE their way on.

INT: THE BUS - CONTINUOUS

The idea is to pay the FARE COLLECTOR and move through a turnstile. But the kids are all slide UNDER instead. The Fare Collector doesn't look the least bit bothered.

One of the KIDS getting ready to make the slide has a BIG RADIO with him, and in preparation for going under he hands it over to a RATTY LITTLE BUDDY who's already in.

He makes the slide himself, grabs the radio back, and TURNS IT ON.

SUPER TRANSLATED LYRICS

Don't take it wrong, it's alright man  
 Hey you up there!  
 Among other things, I'd like to know  
 And maybe you can help me to understand  
 How these suffering people are  
 Gonna play carnival  
 Beating on an empty pan  
 Woh ohh oh  
 I just wanna understand  
 Woh ohh oh  
 I just wanna understand  
 Woh ohh oh  
 I just wanna understand  
 Woh ohh oh  
 I just wanna understand

Every last kid on the bus SINGS. And then the song REALLY KICKS IN.

SWING IT!

Buses full, people jammed together  
 I wonder if anything in life is supposed to last  
 Hotter than hell, everybody's broke  
 I doubt that God's from around here  
 He doesn't take the bus, or get stuck in crowds  
 But he must have to hear lots of complaining  
 Doesn't have color or marital status  
 Could he actually be the one in charge around here?  
 They tell me he's everywhere  
 In the lines, on the sidewalks  
 In the antennas and the air  
 I'm not going to ask for anything  
 Or give thanks for anything  
 If God's here on Earth  
 He's got a lot to answer for!

MAYHEM! Kids pound out the rhythm everywhere their hands can reach: the sides - the seats - the ceiling of the bus.

Almost as a second thought we see Zoom in his beatboy gear and backpack, standing in the aisle toward the front.

Shoved in behind him are a couple of grubby URCHINS who'd made up part of the crowd back at the bus stop, who'd CLAWED AND ELBOWED their way onto the bus even more mercilessly than the others.

The Urchins are wearing dirty shorts -- only. No cheap canvas sneakers, no cheap T-shirts, no cheap sandals. It looks like it's been a while since they've been washed up.

The Little Girl has found herself squeezed into a place not too far behind Zoom and the Urchins. She's singing.

A MIDDLE-AGED MAN sits close by. He isn't.

EXT: A BUS STOP - CONTINUOUS

The bus pulls up and the doors open.

INT: THE BUS - CONTINUOUS

Under Zoom's nose a small and sprightly HAND WHIPS OUT and SNATCHES the MIDDLE-AGED MAN'S WATCH from his wrist.

Zoom looks like (what the fuck was that?!).

EXT: THE BUS STOP - CONTINUOUS

SHOUTING and SHOVING and YELLING and CONFUSION.

The music gets SHUT OFF.

AND OUT OF THE BUS BOLT THE URCHINS, sprinting like Olympians. A GRUBBY FIST is wrapped tightly around the watch and its broken band.

The Boys disappear into a favela, one of the ubiquitous brick shantytowns the bus has been passing.

INT: THE BUS - CONTINUOUS

THE DRIVER looks back at the Robbed Man, shaking his head in commiseration. He closes the door and pulls away.

The Robbed Man looks up at Zoom.

ROBBED MAN

(accent)

I should have been more careful,  
and you must be too.

Zoom is taken aback.

ZOOM

How'd you pick me out of the crowd?  
My mouth's been zipped.

ROBBED MAN  
Your clothes speak for you.

You should wear your pack in the front...

ZOOM  
Like a baby carrier?! No way José!  
And it looks to me like you're the  
one that oughtta be careful!

ROBBED MAN  
I beg your pardon?

ZOOM  
(slipping into his hip-  
hop mannerisms)  
Who got robbed? Me...or you? I can  
handle this place. I'm from New  
York City.

ROBBED MAN  
But this isn't New York, is it.

Zoom looks out the window. Not by a long shot.

ROBBED MAN (cont'd)  
The important thing is not to fool  
yourself into thinking that you are  
wiser than you are. One of the few  
advantages of getting old is  
discovering this. It's the other  
side of strength and beauty. They  
seldom all come one person at one  
time. That's why God put young and  
old together in the world.

The man gathers himself up as the bus pulls over.

ROBBED MAN (cont'd)  
I'll be getting off here. All the  
best to you young man.

ZOOM  
Yeah... thanks...

The man gets off with a courteous nod to the driver. The bus  
pulls away.

ZOOM (cont'd)  
(to himself)  
Fools fool themselves. And there  
ain't nothin' worse than an old  
fool!

CUT TO:

EXT: THE END OF THE LINE

The bus swings around a corner and pulls to a stop.

Zoom is disgorged along with the rest of the passengers. He stands out (like a sore thumb) on the sidewalk, looking this way and that, trying to cover his confusion with would-be cool, not sure what to do next.

The crowd getting onto the bus that Zoom just got off of includes a couple of BIG GUYS. They've got packs on -- baby carrier-style.

Zoom stares, and turns slowly and suspiciously to look over his shoulder at his own pack.

He struggles out of the straps, several coins tumbling from a pocket as he does so, BOUNCING on the sidewalk, RINGING, rolling away...

Zoom turns the pack around. A POCKET hangs open...

ZOOM

SHIT!

Zoom THRUSTS his hand in and GROPEs.

He pulls his empty hand out. He LOOKS UP, MOVING HIS LIPS like people do sometimes when they're calculating.

Zoom drops the pack and JAMS his hands into his front jeans pockets, his back jeans pockets. He PATS himself all over.

His EYES close and he BREATHES like his lungs aren't extracting oxygen.

In the background, the LITTLE GIRL OBSERVES...

CUT TO:

EXT: STREET - LATE AFTERNOON

Zoom walks, a zombie, dragging his backpack along behind him like a stubborn dog.

He stops a PASSERBY and proffers a wrinkled piece of paper.

The Passerby accepts the paper, looks at it, returns it to Zoom, and walks away with suspicious backward glances.

FADE INTO AND OUT OF several variations of this scene.

Some walk away without accepting the paper. Others accept it, look at it, shake their heads "no", and hand it back.

EXT. STREET - IT'S ALMOST DARK

Zoom stops ANOTHER PASSERBY under the SHADY BRANCH of a LARGE TREE overhanging the street. He doesn't notice, but there's a girl sitting up on that branch -- THE Little Girl.

She OBSERVES as he hands the paper to the Passerby, and she sees the GRAVE DISAPPOINTMENT struck across ZOOM'S FACE as the Passerby hands the paper back while shaking his head "no", continuing on his way, leaving Zoom standing there alone.

ZOOM LOOKS UP. He can't see the Little Girl. She's hidden. He repeats something he'd said before back in the apartment in New York:

ZOOM  
help me...

The Little Girl's EXPRESSION softens to sympathetic sorrow.

EXT: A NARROW LONELY STREET - SEVERAL MINUTES LATER

Zoom feels a lightening of the load he's pulling. He SPINS and sees that the Little Girl is holding his pack. It's unwieldy for her because she's not so big herself.

He reacts like he's being mugged. He PULLS. But the Little Girl doesn't give it up. She's TUGGED FORWARD, hanging on.

She LOOKS UP at Zoom, BOBS the pack up and down, and TILTS HER HEAD to one side like (let's go).

Zoom PULLS again. The Little Girl is JERKED FORWARD again.

She SMILES and nods (COME ON!!!).

Out of sheer exhaustion Zoom gives up. He turns and walks, the strap in his hand a leash connecting him to his miniature beast of burden.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. STREET

Now Zoom feels a GENTLE TUGGING. The Little Girl wants to turn into a side street. With small choice he allows her to take the lead.

More and more people fill the street -- more agitation.

And then the duet is plunged into a CROWDED, BRIGHTLY LIT SQUARE.

The Little Girl takes Zoom to the STAGE set up at one end, and putting his bag down she -- VERY EMPHATICALLY -- motions for him to STAY PUT.

She disappears into the crowd:

LITTLE GIRL  
RICARDO!!! RICARDO!!!

Zoom stands alone.

A TAP on his shoulder. It's a ROADIE wanting him to please MOVE ASIDE. Zoom complies and the guy starts handing up DRUMS.

THE KIND YOU BEAT WITH YOUR HANDS (Man!)

The Little Girl appears again, and again she emphatically motions for Zoom to stay where he is. Again, she disappears into the throng, LOOKING THIS WAY AND THAT.

Zoom sees SEVERAL ELDERLY GENTLEMEN, 1940's HEP CATS in WHITE RIO ZOOT SUITS and PANAMA HATS, appearing out of the crowd.

The men walk around to the back of the stage.

Another minute or so passes, then a CONGA BLAST -- HAND POWER from the stage.

The CROWD looks up. Zoom ain't interested. He's watching the suckers. He sees the Hep Cats out there looking up with everybody else. Zoom's expression reads: (That ain't the band?)

He steps back far enough to see what everybody else sees...

KIDS LIKE HIM, more or less. They EXPLODE INTO IT.

The people in the square explode into it too. Sonny's flippant remark at the airport departure gate makes serious sense to Zoom now.

A CIRCULAR AREA opens up in front of the stage. One at a time, dancers jump into the circle and show what they've got. Zoom is shocked to see the LITTLE GIRL jump in. She BLOWS THEM ALL AWAY. She OUTDANCES the bigger girls. She bows out of the circle to the rowdiest response yet.

Another song begins, and ANOTHER GIRL enters. She's about Zoom's age, with skin like shining copper and dark hair cascading over her shoulders. ELEGANT SENSUALITY INCARNATE.

She dances...until the one-person-in-the-circle-at-a-time code is broken. A BRUTE in expensive clothes SHOVS his way in.

The Luminous Girl stops dancing. She stands helplessly while the Brute RAGES at her. He points to her -- and then to himself. He tries to FORCE her to dance with him, taking her by the arm and pressing into her, VULGARLY ROTATING HIS HIPS.

She PULLS out of his grasp and turns to walk away. But the Brute reaches out and grabs her by the wrist, YANKING HER BACK ROUGHLY.

The Luminous Girl, with teeth clenched, STRUGGLES to get free. The Brute releases her, and looking at her with WIDE EYES like SHE'S insulted HIM he SLAPS HER HARD ACROSS THE FACE. She puts her hand up to where he hit her and gets SHOVED to the ground.

The BAND sees what's happening from their vantage point on stage. They STOP PLAYING.

Also witnessing from the stage is a SHINING WOMAN. She runs back to hurriedly tell a MAN WITH LONGWOVEN LOCKS.

Meanwhile the Brute stares down at the PROSTRATE GIRL, who in turn stares up at him with a mixture of DEFIANCE and FEAR on her face.

ALL IS QUIET until A FIGURE FLIES into the circle, ATTACKING THE BRUTE in flurry of blows...powerless and ineffectual blows. It's Zoom, and in half a second he's on the ground bleeding from the corner of his mouth.

Nobody moves to help.

The Girl climbs to her feet. The Brute ADVANCES on her again. And Zoom ATTACKS again, ineptly saving the Girl only in that he now diverts the Brute's attention to himself. Zoom is being beaten up. It looks like he's gonna get killed.

And then another, SMALLER FIGURE LEAPS from the sidelines onto the Brute's back -- LEGS WRAPPING around his chest and ARMS LOCKING around his neck. This is the LITTLE Girl.

The Brute forgets Zoom while he tries to deal with this new problem -- he's reaching around and trying to peel her off. She hangs on with FEROCIOUS INTENSITY.

Zoom, half-senseless on the ground, hears something he's heard before:

FROM OFFSCREEN  
BABALOOOOOOOOOO!!!

He tries to shake it off:

ZOOM  
Huh?!

A SLIGHTLY LARGER FIGURE jumps into the circle -- this one a BOY with FINELY-WOVEN DREADLOCKS and a FEDORA like Sonny's.

He KICKS the Brute's feet out from under him and PLUCKS the Little Girl from the Brute's back.

He TOSSES her to another boy, who tosses her to another, who tosses her to another -- like a bucket brigade to safety.

Then he and the other Boys grab Zoom and the Luminous Girl and haul them out of the circle and into the multitude.

The MAN WITH LONGWOVEN LOCKS finally breaks his way through into the NOW EMPTY CIRCLE.

EXT: A STREET OFF THE SQUARE

The group emerges into a quieter area. The Luminous Girl isn't with them. Zoom is being supported on both sides, his legs not keeping up.

ZOOM  
Where we goin'?

BOY WITH THE FEDORA  
To our building.

Around the corner and through the yawning doorway of a DERELICT STRUCTURE. No roof or real interior to speak of. More of a shell around a kind of a COURTYARD under the open sky.

INT/EXT: WITHIN THE CONFINES OF THE ABANDONED BUILDING

The boys lay Zoom back onto a makeshift mattress. Zoom looks around:

ZOOM  
Where's your stuff?

BOY WITH THE FEDORA  
What stuff?

ZOOM  
Windows...doors...TV's...

He pauses to think.

ZOOM (cont'd)  
Where's my stuff?

He answers his own question:

I know. It's with my money...and your stuff.

He groans and rolls over onto his side, facing away from the Boys, who move off to lay down on their own respective would-be mattresses. Quiet conversation among themselves.

A FIRE burns in the courtyard. From somewhere out there in the darkness we can hear the strains of Bob Marley's ONE LOVE.

FADE TO BLACK

The music merges peacefully into tranquillity and an extended period of HEAVY SONORIFIC BREATHING...eventually, startlingly broken by LOUD drumming:

SMASH CUT TO:

ZOOM! He's startled awake.

He LEAPS almost horizontally into the air.

He looks out into the courtyard.

His POV: The four boys from last night are playing outsized (for them) drums slung over their shoulders. They are accompanying music from a radio/CD player mounted into a multiple thermos-holding scooter contraption done up like Shaft meets Star Wars.

He wrenches himself up and lurches out. The boys stop playing when they see him.

ZOOM (cont'd)  
What the hell happened to my  
civilized rights?

The music from the scooter continues.

It can be seen through OPEN SPACES in the background that the back of the building abuts the square of the night before, the open spaces giving onto behind and above the stage.

BOY WITH THE FEDORA  
You slept a long time. They  
expired. There's somebody here to  
see you...

And then the music from the radio scooter makes a sea-change. SCHUBERT'S AVE MARIA, that lovely arcing melody, fills the air.

BOY WITH THE FEDORA (cont'd)  
It's six o'clock...p.m. All the  
radio stations play this music at  
six o'clock.

Our vision sweeps to the courtyard entrance. Diaphanous, walking like a biblical madonna serenaded by angels you can almost see, she enters -- the LUSTROUS GIRL who was "saved" by Zoom. She almost floats across the open space, just kept from saintliness by the moving jaguarlike sensuality of her hips.

TRANSUBSTANTIATION OF THE KID

Arrival. She stands in front of him and takes him in.

The music ends.

LUSTROUS GIRL

Last night...there was nobody...and then you were there...

ZOOM

I felt that way when I saw you too...

She evinces a sweet smile.

Awkward silence.

ZOOM (cont'd)

Who was that man?

The girl looks down.

LUSTROUS GIRL

I lived with him.

Angels plunge.

ZOOM

He was your boyfriend?!!!

LUSTROUS GIRL

That man is married! I was the maid! I worked for him and his wife!

ZOOM

The maid?! What was his problem? Why was he so mad at you?

LUSTROUS GIRL

He thought he owned me...he still thinks so. For him that meant having sex with me...

Zoom's jaw drops.

ZOOM  
You had SEX with him?!!!

LUSTROUS GIRL  
NO! But he wanted to. He threatened  
to kill me because I refused!

HISSESSSSSSSS from offscreen. Next to the fire a THERMOS has  
fallen over, releasing its contents into the coals, creating  
a CLOUD OF STEAM.

The Boy With The Fedora cranks it up and yells:

BOY WITH THE FEDORA  
BABALOOOOOOOOOO!!!

And out of somewhere jets a SPRITE to snatch the thermos up.

It is, of course, the Little Girl.

Zoom turns to the Boy With The Fedora:

ZOOM  
Babaloo?

A light bulb blinks on.

ZOOM (cont'd)  
Ricardo?!

The boy's still wearing the big drum. Zoom busts a smile:

ZOOM (cont'd)  
RICKY!...

LUSTROUS GIRL (OC)  
If there's ever anything I can do  
for you...

Zoom turns to face her foursquare...

ZOOM  
Besides telling me your name?

She's looking at him with expectancy. He's looking down,  
thinking...

When he looks back up his playful demeanor is gone.

ZOOM (cont'd)  
I'm looking for somebody...

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT: THE DOCKS - WANING EVENING LIGHT

Zoom, Madalena, and Ricky are boarding a launch.

RICKY

All the tears on all the bent knees  
on all the worlds in all the wide  
wide universe would not have made  
any difference. Look at this  
weather!

CUMULONIMBUS and RISING WIND. Heavy weather rolling in.

RICKY (cont'd)

The only thing she's afraid of is  
being left alone...

Behind their backs a SMALL FIGURE dives from the quay into the water. The camera refocuses. It's Babalu, swimming away from shore.

The towlines are tossed and the BOAT pulls away from the dock, turning out into the choppy water of the bay, picking up speed. A MAD DASH of foam and flailing arms vectors in. Babalu just makes it.

She manages to GRAB ONTO one of the old tires strung along the hull and finds herself SKIMMING along in the wake.

With a monumental effort she HEAVES herself up and CLAMBERS aboard.

Angle on ZOOM, MADALENA, AND RICKY SITTING SIDE-BY-SIDE.

A SCREAM (OC)

[Nooooooooooooooooooooo!!!!!!]

THREE HEADS swivel in unison.

Babalu is being swung by shirt and britches, arms and legs THRASHING WILDLY at empty air. She's about to be pitched back into roiling waters by the boat's HAIRY-ARMED MONEY COLLECTOR.

Ricky bolts back and GRABS the guy by the arm.

\* Conversation in [braces] indicates spoken Portuguese with English subtitles.

RICKY

[I'LL PAY!!! I'LL PAY!!!]

The stowaway is set down. She embraces Ricky tightly as he gets out the money and hands it over.

RICKY (cont'd)  
 (to Babalu)  
 [I'll kill you when we get back!]

The Girl just HIGHBEAMS up a smile.

CUT TO:

EXT: THE BOAT - A FEW MINUTES LATER

Heaving over rolling swells, flashes of lightning  
 illuminating the cloud cover. THUNDER. Portentous.

Ricky breaks the silence:

RICKY  
 (cadenced)  
 Full fathom five thy father lies  
 Of his bones are coral made  
 Those are pearls that were his eyes  
 Nothing of him that does fade  
 But does suffer a sea change  
 Into something rich...  
 And strange...

ZOOM  
 My father?...

RICKY  
 (embracing Babalu's  
 shoulders)  
 Ours. He made the sea change.  
 Before that he was a fisherman.

ZOOM  
 The rhymes...

RICKY  
 ...went down our throats with the  
 bread that was supposed to keep us  
 alive long enough for the  
 missionaries to save our souls.  
 (a smile)  
 The bread worked...

Zoom's gaze shifts to Madalena.

MADALENA  
 My father drowned too. The ship in  
 his bottle sank.

The wind almost carries her words away...

ZOOM  
 How'd you hook up with Mr. Munster?

MADALENA  
 Poor country girls in the city do  
 that...

ZOOM  
 I woulda stayed in the country.

MADALENA  
 There was nothing there for me  
 anymore.

ZOOM  
 What do you have here?

Her chin rises a little:

MADALENA  
 A chance...

ZOOM  
 With the kind of pressure that guy  
 was putting on you?

Angle on:

RICKY  
 Diamonds are created under  
 pressure.

Zoom smiles.

THE PROW OF THE BOAT DRIVES INTO A WAVE, SPRAY DRENCHING AND  
 STARTLING THE VOYAGERS. BABALU STANDS UP AND SCREAMS:

BABALU  
 IEMENJAAAH!

The name is echoed as a whisper in the tempest. Zoom is  
 panicking.

RICKY  
 (over the howling wind)  
 The Lady of the Sea...

Zoom manages to control himself. He looks out over the side  
 of the boat at the roiling water.

ZOOM  
 A lady?! Bad hair day man...

Back to Ricky.

ZOOM (CONT'D) (cont'd)  
 Do you really believe in that  
 stuff?

RICKY  
I believe that the gods who rule  
people's lives are the gods that  
aren't forgotten by their people.

ZOOM  
Did the missionaries teach you that  
too?

RICKY  
Not on purpose...

THE BOAT LURCHES INTO ANOTHER WAVE

RICKY (CONT'D)  
...BUT THEY TAUGHT ME HOW TO PRAY!

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT: A DOCK ON THE OTHER SIDE OF THE BAY

The four are disembarking, drenched to the bone.

ZOOM  
What time's the next boat back?

RICKY  
Tomorrow.

Madalena heaves a VISIBLE SIGH OF RELIEF.

After a pause the party moves off along a small road, into  
the stormy night.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT: A HUMBLE HOUSE SET BACK FROM THE ROAD - SHORTLY LATER

Arrival. Zoom stops and STARES, TRANSFIXED by the simple  
dwelling.

The RISE AND FALL of his chest is clearly visible as he  
speaks:

ZOOM  
I always assumed my father's life  
began with my memories of him...  
until now anyway...

He gathers his courage and steps forward, the others  
accompanying him.

Up to the door together. They look at each other.

The initiative is taken by Ricky. He raises a fist and POUNDS.

A VOICE  
[Who DARES disturb an old man on a  
night like this?]

PANIC in Zoom's DARTING eyes. He's ready to run. The only thing preventing him from doing so is RICKY'S HAND tightly clenched around his forearm.

RICKY  
[Master! It's Ricardo! There's  
somebody here with me who must  
speak with you!]

The door is pulled open. In its place, illuminated from behind, stands A MAN MADE NO LESS FORMIDABLE BY THE PASSAGE OF TIME.

GATO  
Ricardo!

Water is dripping from their noses.

GATO (cont'd)  
[Well come in!]

Gato swings the door shut behind them.

GATO (cont'd)  
[Something to dry off with...]

He disappears into a back room. The four look around.

THE WALLS ARE PLETHORA OF MYSTERY -- amulets and beads, masks, berimbaus, drums.

A MASK ALMOST IDENTICAL TO THE ONE IN NEW YORK occupies a special place on the wall -- illuminated by the flickering of two votive candles set beneath it.

Zoom's wandering eyes light there, his attention narrowing exclusively to the mystery.

THE EXTREMELY DEEP BASS NOTE OF BEFORE RESONATES UNDER THE SOUNDTRACK

Zoom is rapt, captivated when Gato returns with towels.

GATO  
Shango...

Zoom jumps.

GATO (cont'd)

[Shango...the warrior god. It's he who hurls thunder on nights like this.]

Ricky translates.

ZOOM

(timidly)

But it's just electricity...  
exploding in the air...

Ricky translates.

GATO

[It is. But not just. Not all nights are the same. Not all storms are the same...]

(pause)

Not all places are the same...]

He continues, indicating, Ricky translating...

GATO (cont'd)

[Shango is one of many. They came with our people. Our names were changed... but they kept theirs. These are called by their Yoruba names. That's Iansã, wife of Shango, goddess of the winds, storms, and the Niger River. She carries the souls of the dead to the other world. The Congos call her Matamba. There's Iemanjah, goddess of the sea, mother of the other gods. To the Congos she's Dandalunda...]

(pointing)

Oxalá, the father, maker of men...Zambi to the Congo nation. There are many...]

(to Ricky)

Who is this young man? And why does he need your words to understand mine?]

RICKY

[Master...this is your grandson. He's come a long way to see you...to talk to you...]

Now Gato stares hard at Zoom, taking him in.

GATO

[So this is the boy... And what does he want to talk about?]

RICKY

[Your son.]

GATO

[And why does he want to talk about somebody I've spent so many years trying to forget?]

RICKY

[Because your son is dying...he wants to see you. Your presence could even help to save his life...]

GATO

[His life? Life in itself is not important. What is important is what you fill it with. The contents of my son's life are not important to me. I have no wish to see him. Tell the young man that.]

Ricky does so. Zoom starts to look frantic.

ZOOM

My father's life is not important?!!! To him?!!! Well I'm a part of my father's life!!! What the hell does that make me?!!! And he...thatpigheaded old man... he is too!!! Tell him that!!!

Zoom heaves the front door open and runs out into the rain, stopping out in front of the house, chest heaving, features twisted in hurt and anger. Ricky appears at his side.

RICKY

He's offered to let us spend the night here...

ZOOM

I'll sleep on nails and broken glass before I lay my body out in that house. You do what you want.

Zoom moves to leave. Ricky grabs him by the arm.

RICKY

No! Wait here.

Ricky returns to the house. A few moments and Ricky and the girls appear in the doorway, pausing to exchange words with Gato.

The Old Man breaks out into loud laughter.

GATO  
 (incredulous)  
 Zoom?!!! Zoom?!!!

He says something else and shaking his head like he still doesn't believe it he re-enters the house and slams the door shut behind him.

ZOOM  
 (indicating derisively)  
 What's his problem now?!

RICKY  
 Your name...

ZOOM  
 Fuck'm... I didn't pick it. I got stuck with it!

RICKY  
 Yeah. He's the one that stuck you.

A beat.

ZOOM  
 That figures. He musta thought Clarabel and Bozo were too dignified.

RICKY  
 Zumbi was a king. What makes you think you even deserve his name?

MADALENA  
 Ricky...

RICKY  
 Well?

He's staring hard at Zoom.

ZOOM  
 King of what? Spades?

RICKY  
 Palmares! The nation of people who rose up and took back their own lives...

ZOOM  
 I never heard of him...

RICKY

You have now. Maybe it's time for  
you to rise up and take yours back  
too.

ZOOM

First you gotta have one...

The statement hangs in the air for several seconds. Then:

ZOOM (cont'd)

Is there a YMCA around here?

CUT TO:

EXT: ANOTHER HUMBLE HOUSE, A LITTLE LARGER

The four stand out in front of warmlit refuge, their insides  
rocked by POWERFUL DRUMMING coming from inside.

ZOOM

Where I come from this is party  
crashing.

RICKY

It's church here...

They approach and enter.

INT: A CROWDED ROOM

Full of observers. Zoom, pulled by curiosity, moves through  
to the front. Madalena follows him.

In a cleared central area a TALL MAN OF SINGULAR POWER  
(somebody like Dennis Rodman or Shaq) dances with long  
sweeping movements of his arms.

The eyes of both are riveted upon the dancer. They stage  
whisper to each other.

MADALENA

Shango.

ZOOM

A man...dressed up.

MADALENA

He's both.

ZOOM

Like Certs and the Doublemint  
Twins?

MADALENA  
 There's a Holy Trinity isn't there?  
 Father, Son, Holy Spirit...

ZOOM  
 Try Holy Ghost.

ON THE OTHER SIDE OF THE ROOM, Ricky talks to a TINY OLD WOMAN dressed head-to-toe in white. He points to Zoom and the old woman looks. She NODS "yes".

ZOOM CONTINUES TO RAPTLY WATCH THE TALL MAN OF SINGULAR POWER. It's hard to say which is more powerful - dancer - or dance.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT: ANOTHER ROOM IN ANOTHER PART OF THE HOUSE - LATER

The Pilgrims are seated with ancient MOTHER NINA.

She looks at Zoom with appraising eyes.

MOTHER NINA  
 (Madalena translating)  
 So...you've come back to us...

ZOOM  
 How can I come back to a place I've never been? I was born in New York.

Madalena translates.

MOTHER NINA  
 (with a smile, Madalena translating)  
 But you were made here.

ZOOM  
 (to Madalena)  
 How does she know?

MADALENA  
 (hesitating)  
 She's Gato's sister...

Zoom jumps up.

ZOOM  
 Why didn't you tell me that?!

RICKY  
 We were afraid you wouldn't come...

ZOOM

Know what? You were right!

He moves to stomp out...

MADALENA

ZOOM! You don't have anything against her! She's done nothing to harm you! Maybe she can help! Listen to her!

He softens.

ZOOM

Well if she's his sister...maybe she can talk some sense into the mummy.

He sits back down.

Madalena exchanges words with Mother Nina and turns back:

MADALENA

I left out that last part. And she's saying that many years ago Gato tried to do exactly that with your father.

ZOOM

He tried?! What the hell's that old man on?!

Madalena confers, and turns back.

MADALENA

Axé.

ZOOM'S FACE registers question mark.

RICKY

The Force...only it's REAL.

Mother Nina sees that Zoom doesn't get it. Madalena translates for her as she speaks:

MOTHER NINA

Axé is the the connection between death and life. It is what animates the inanimate. It is what allows the raw stuff of the world to fold in upon itself and look out and say..."I am alive!"

Several moments...

ZOOM

I can dig that. What's it got to do with anything?

MADALENA

It all depends on how you see things.

ZOOM

Like Einstein and relativity?

MADALENA

I wouldn't know...

Mother Nina speaks again, Madalena again speaking for her:

MOTHER NINA

Striving...strength...growth...  
desire...

(several breaths)

Axé is what made your family possible. It's what kept it possible through generations of hardship. Gato... Gato's father... his father's father... his father's father's father... They got it from where they knew they knew how to get it. And Gato saw your father move away from that. The end of something...

Deep, extended, excruciatingly long S-I-L-E-N-C-E...

ZOOM

What if it wasn't...

MADALENA

Wasn't what Zoom?

ZOOM

The end... What if my father didn't leave it behind. What if it's with me. What if I've got it.

Madalena confers. MOTHER NINA LAUGHS.

ZOOM (cont'd)

I don't think I share these people's sense of humor.

MADALENA

They're your people Zoom.

ZOOM

Right. You make your enemies and  
choose your friends. You get stuck  
with your people.

Madalena confers.

MADALENA

She says Gato has to see that...in  
ways he understands.

ZOOM

And what ways would those be?

Madalena confers.

MADALENA

The old ways...

A beat.

ZOOM

And who's gonna show me what they  
are?

A CLOSE-UP on the Old Woman's face, her eyes BRIGHT with  
something, looking deep into Zoom. Hold that look for several  
moments...

CUT TO:

EXT: A SMALL, ISOLATED BEACH - DAY

Zoom stands alone.

PAN UP TO:

EXT: A STREET ON THE HILL ABOVE THE BEACH WHERE ZOOM STANDS

Luminous Girl arm-in-arm between Sprite and Artful Dodger,  
the three heading away. Madalena's got a Knicks cap on.

CUT BACK TO:

EXT: ZOOM ON THE BEACH

He waits. He scans the bay -- an empty stretch of water from  
where he stands to the opposite shore. He shifts around.

He bends over and picks up a rock, tossing it up and down. He  
looks out at the water. (Where the hell is this guy?)

He tosses the rock into the air -- higher and higher --  
catching it on the downfall. He squints out. Fucking nothing.

Laying in the sand a few feet away, however, there is something interesting -- a driftwood bat. Zoom picks it up. Sammy Sosa at plate. He heaves the stone high into the air -- SMACK!

THUD!

Into the CHEST of a HUGE MAN standing in a rowboat drifting up to the shore where Zoom now stands ready to shit his pants. The Man is shirtless shoeless PHYSICAL POWER in a rough pair of shorts. His expression is SEVERE.

He is the TALL MAN OF SINGULAR POWER who danced the dance of Shango at Mother Nina's house.

In a couple of seconds the boat has beached and Zoom is shifting around anxiously like he's thinking about running. But it looks like he knows he wouldn't have much of a chance. The man's thighs are ETCHED GRANITE.

The man motions for Zoom to get into the boat. Zoom points to himself:

ZOOM  
I like my head the size it is!

The man points at Zoom again, and again at the boat -- this time with more vehemence. Zoom shakes his head no.

ZOOM (cont'd)  
No way José. I don't go on  
boatrides with zombies!

CUT TO:

EXT: THE BOAT OUT IN THE BAY

Zoom strains at the oars. The man sits facing Zoom with his arms crossed like a Nubian guard.

EXT: THE SHORE ON THE OTHER SIDE OF THE BAY

The boat arrives. The man stands up and gets out. Zoom crawls over the side and COLLAPSES into the water. The man indicates for him to pull the boat up onto the beach. Zoom painfully complies. He stands exhausted, contemplating the blisters on the palms of his hands.

When he looks up the man is UPON HIM, a MACHETE in one hand and a ROPE in the other.

Zoom SCREAMS and COWERS, burying his head in his arms.

He feels a JERKING, and it's the man tying the rope around his waist.

The man slips the machete through the rope and then points to the top of a tree, to the coconuts. He points to Zoom and with a HACKING MOTION of his hand indicates that Zoom is to cut the coconuts down.

Zoom goes to the tree, hugs it, and HANGS HELPLESSLY. The man ANGRILY MOTIONS for Zoom to climb. Zoom manages to worm his way up a foot or so.

ZOOM  
(desperately)  
I can't... I can't...

The man picks up another MACHETE and HURLS it at the tree.

It enters - WHANG! - just below the crack of Zoom's ass.

Zoom FLIES up the tree like an orangutan on methedrine.

From forty feet up he looks back down poutily. The man repeats the hacking motion. Zoom pulls out the machete and does as he's told, inexpertly, coconuts plunging to the ground far below.

EXT: THE TRAINING CAMP - A SHORT TIME LATER

Zoom gathers the coconuts into a pile under the eye of the Gardener. Leaves and cuttings and jetsam are tossed into another pile.

EXT: THE TRAINING CAMP - STILL LATER

Zoom tosses a last few coconuts onto the now quite substantial pile as the Gardener observes. He wipes the sweat from his brow and looks to the Gardener (what now?).

EXT: OUT ON THE WAVES

Zoom rows, by himself, a boatload of coconuts back across the bay.

EXT: THE SMALL BEACH WHERE HE MET THE GARDENER

Zoom beaches the boat and unloads the coconuts, another pile. When he's done he pushes the boat back out into the water, takes up the oars, and heads back the way he came.

EXT: THE BEACH AT THE TRAINING CAMP - DARK

Zoom pulls the boat ashore and collapses into sleep beside a burning campfire.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT/EXT: THE COURTYARD OF THE ABANDONED BUILDING

On respective makeshift accommodations sleep Ricky, Babalu, and Madalena. The courtyard campfire has burned down to coals.

FADE TO BLACK

EXT: THE BEACH AT THE TRAINING CAMP - MORNING

Zoom sleeps. But he's morphed into a dirty, matted-haired, muscular version of himself. Behind him the pile of coconut cuttings has grown substantially.

TIME HAS OBVIOUSLY PASSED

He gets up and wades down into the water, splashing his face in what looks like a morning wake-up ritual.

The Gardener emerges from the trees that line the beach.

Zoom walks back up, picks up the rope, ties it around his waste, and slips the machete in. He jogs lankily to a nearby tree and climbs it, expertly, like he's been doing it all his life. He begins cutting.

CUT TO:

EXT: THE ISLAND CAMP - LATE EVENING

Zoom finishes loading the boat and pushes it out into the water, begins pulling at the oars. This is done expertly too. We see the PLAY OF HIS MUSCLES as he pulls.

CUT TO:

EXT: THE SMALL BEACH ON THE OTHER SIDE OF THE BAY

Zoom beaches the boat and unloads the coconuts. It's almost dark now. He looks out over the water and says to himself:

ZOOM  
Not tonight Lady...

He pulls the boat up onto the beach and turns it over. He heads up to the street.

CUT TO:

EXT: ZOOM AT A PAY PHONE - SHORTLY LATER

He pulls a scrunched up card from his pocket and dials:

ZOOM  
A, T, and T!  
(now more slowly)  
(MORE)

ZOOM(cont'd)

A...T...and T? Yeah... I want to make a collect call... Yeah. The number is

(he looks at the card)

two-one-two...three five nine...four seven...one five. What? Oh...my name is Zoom.

He waits. Then the familiar:

RECORDING

I'm sorry. That number has been temporarily disconnected.

ZOOM

Shit!

He hangs up the telephone. Another idea. He picks it up again.

INTERCUT:

INT: RHAKEEM'S RECORDS

The place is empty except for the CLEANUP GUY mopping.

The phone RINGS. The Cleanup Guy answers.

CLEANUP GUY

Collect from where?!!! Is he fucking crazy?!!! Ain't nothing collect 'round here but my paycheck!

He bangs the phone down muttering:

CLEANUP GUY (cont'd)

Zumbi from Brazil! Mortal Kombat shit waste of time!...

CUT BACK TO:

ZOOM

He's STARING at the handset like it's personally responsible.

He drops it and leaves it dangling as he turns away.

CUT TO:

INT/EXT: THE COURTYARD

Madalena sweeps the ground with a homemade broom. Babalu stokes the fire. We can hear SOUNDCHECK SOUNDS coming from the openings onto the square.

Zoom enters. Babalu sees him first.

BABALU

Zoom!

They both run to him, both are about to embrace him. But they both pull up at the last millisecond. He is discussing.

MADALENA

Zoom! What have you been doing?!

ZOOM

Workin'... like a slave...

She considers this.

MADALENA

What about that old way stuff?

Zoom considers this.

ZOOM

If it means being forced to play the fool...I've been learning it. If it means learning to get taken advantage of...I've been learning it. If it means learning to work my ass off and not get anything for it...I got that down real good.

BABALU

What are you supposed to be learning?

Madalena and Zoom look down at the Little Girl.

They look at each other.

ZOOM

I didn't know you understood...

BABALU

There are a lot of things I don't understand...and there are a lot of things you don't know.

MADALENA

(not missing a beat)  
Babalu...

Babalu looks up.

MADALENA (cont'd)

This boy needs a haircut.

Babalu flashes her MILLION GIGAVOLT SMILE and dashes over and reaches in somewhere and pulls out one BIGASS MACHETE, looking even bigger in her waif's arm.

Zoom's EYES OPEN WIDE.

MADALENA (cont'd)  
I have another idea!

CUT TO:

INT/EXT: THE COURTYARD - SHORTLY LATER

Zoom, cleaned-up, sits in front of Madalena. She nimbly weaves colored beads into his hair.

MORE SOUNDCHECK SOUNDS

As Madalena works those sounds evolve into a

FUNKY EXTENDED BOTTOM-HEAVY SOUNDCHECK PROTOSONG

Madalena sways to it playfully.

Zoom gets up to have a look. His finished plaits are pulled together and secured by a BIG HAIR CLIP.

MADALENA  
Hey! I'm not finished!

Ignoring her, curious, Zoom walks over and looks out.

We can't see what he sees.

ZOOM  
What the hell?! Where'd they learn  
how to do that down here?!

Now Madalena is at his side.

MADALENA  
Gato...

Zoom and Madalena's POV: A CIRCLE OF KIDS, RICKY AND THE BOYS included, WHIRLS and CARTWHEELS and SOMERSAULTS.

ZOOM  
That old man teaches  
breakdancing?!!!

That IS kind of what it looks like.

MADALENA  
Breakdancing?! No! The fight of the  
warrior slaves!

ZOOM  
 (barely able to contain  
 hisself)  
 Warrior slaves?! Who was they  
 fightin'? Tha Fly Girls?

Madalena doesn't get the reference.

ZOOM (cont'd)  
 I mean Ali. He danced and they went  
 down. Those guys look like they're  
 practicing a Chinese fire drill!

He leans out the window and yells:

ZOOM (cont'd)  
 HEY RICKY! WHERE'S THE FORCE!!!

The MUSICIANS crane their necks to see what the yelling's  
 about and the SOUNDCHECK kilters to a halt.

Ricky THRUSTS a FIST into the air. He MOTIONS to a Compatriot  
 by the stage, who grabs a BERIMBAU and tosses it out to him  
 IN DRAMATIC SLOW MOTION.

It finds its mark and is held aloft -- ICONIC POWER -- THOR  
 WITH HIS HAMMER -- SHANGO with his double-bladed axe...

Ricky brings the BERIMBAU down into playing position and  
 manipulates it to and fro LIKE AN ARTHURIAN BROADSWORD. The  
 motion elicits a sound -- a LOUD, unmistakable, STAR WARS  
 LIGHTSABER BUZZ -- ZZZ, ZZZ, ZZZ... Awesome.

EVERYBODY gazes WONDERINGLY upon this MANIFESTATION  
 incarnated in the form of a scruffed-down Jedi --

Until suddenly the spell is broken:

STAGEHAND  
 [HEY YOU! GET THE HELL AWAY FROM  
 THERE!]

A THICK CORD snakes over to the edge of the stage. At the end  
 of the cord is a MIKE. That mike is being held to the lips of  
 the BERIMBAU TOSSER.

The STAGEHAND BOUNDS and the KID is OUT OF THERE.

RICKY  
 (yelling back up)  
 YOU MEAN AXÉ...MY FRIEND! IT'S  
 HERE!!!

Again, he THRUSTS the berimbau aloft.

And a SLOW AND POWERFUL SONG, like an ANCIENT INVOCATION, begins.

It's ONE OF THE MUSICIANS on the stage, looking down at the boys, singing through a microphone. He looks like he knows his way around TOUGH. A couple of his compatriots join him, drums and berimbau, chorus.

RICKY does a slow somersault into the circle and nods twice, once to one of his Compatriots and once to the window where Babalu observes. The Compatriot understands what Zoom wants.

He trots over to the window and looks up to Babalu. She understands too.

She gathers several broken clay BRICKS from the derelict walls of the abandoned building and tosses them down. The Compatriot carries them back over to the circle.

RICKY starts to MOVE. No wires here. This is the REAL DEAL.

SWITCH TO SLOW MOTION

A brick is lobbed at Ricky. He whirls and a foot comes up.

SMAAAAASHHH!

The brick is BLOWN TO SMITHEREENS -- an exploding comet.

Another brick.

Ricky is upside down, balanced on one arm. Pyrotechnics.

FLYING PIECES EVERYWHERE.

BACK TO NORMAL  
SPEED

And YEAH! The stagecrew is DIGGING this action too much to stay put. Berimbau and drums are handed off to less battleworthy stagehands. The music is kept up and a group of guys you wouldn't want to mess with LEAPS down from the stage.

They trade off with the boys, in and out of the circle, a REPRISE OF THE OPENING SCENE. The boys hold their own.

The difficult task of shutting Zoom's mouth has just about been accomplished. More to himself than to Madalena:

ZOOM

You know... maybe there is something to this stuff...

A Kid in the circle looks up at him and slides into a mocking modified version of CHUCK BERRY'S DUCKWALK.

ALL EYES eyes turn up to Zoom.

(What?!)

Babalu's still at the other window. She points to her head and then to Zoom's. Zoom touches his head. The CLIP is still there.

A SUPER CHICKEN COXCOMB

MADALENA imperiously indicates the "seat" abandoned by Zoom. Zoom follows orders and Madalena picks up where she left off, nimble fingers threading beads.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT/EXT: THE ABANDONED BUILDING - DARKNESS HAS FALLEN

The courtyard campfire is burning.

Madalena and Zoom sit side-by-side, propped against one of the structure's crumbling walls. Zoom holds Madalena's hand. He lifts it and peers into it like a gypsy fortune teller.

MADALENA

I don't want to know...

ZOOM

Please.

He looks deeper.

ZOOM (cont'd)

I see a parade...

Madalena brightens a little.

ZOOM (cont'd)

...of endless buckets of soapy water...and brooms and dust pans and sinks stacked to the ceiling with dirty dishes...

Madalena winces. She tries to take her hand back but Zoom doesn't let her.

ZOOM (cont'd)

Wait!

Even closer.

ZOOM (cont'd)  
They're moving!

He looks up.

ZOOM (cont'd)  
Did you ever see Aladdin... the  
movie?

No. He stares back into her palm and continues:

ZOOM (cont'd)  
They're dancing! And you're there  
Madalena. Cinderella with moves.

She looks brightly into his eyes. Her fingers fold over  
his...

Echoing from outside the windows, from the square, amplified  
through loudspeakers: A WOMAN'S VOICE

WOMAN (OC)  
[IS EVERYBODY BEAUTIFUL TONIGHT?]

A ROAR OF AFFIRMATION goes up from the crowd. Zoom stands up  
and helps Madalena to her feet. They walk over together and  
look out.

Their POV: A full square, the SHINING WOMAN standing at the  
microphone on stage. She is joined by the MAN WITH LONGWOVEN  
LOCKS.

The Shining Woman turns to the band, raises her arm, and...

...DRUMS!

From somewhere off to the right of the stage we hear them  
approaching. Commotion, and the crowd parts to make way for a  
CREW OF INTERLOPERS marching in formation, up to in front of  
the stage.

They turn to face the audience.

It's RICKY AND THE BOYS. Showcrashing.

SECURITY BEARS jump down. But before they get the chance to  
manhandle the boys out of the way the Shining Woman and the  
Man With Longwoven Locks motion for them to leave the boys  
alone and where they are.

The Shining Woman smiles down. Ricky flashes a THUMBS-UP.

He flashes another to somebody UP AND BEHIND the Shining  
Woman, BABALU, perched in one of the windows of the Abandoned  
Building behind the stage.

The Shining Woman follows Ricky's gesture and sees the COURAGEOUS LITTLE GIRL who risked her own neck when the Luminous Girl was attacked.

Back to the band -- the Shining Woman again raises her arm.

SHE BRINGS IT DOWN. The square BURSTS into motion. THE BOYS DRUM.

And on her perch, BABALU DANCES AND SINGS, a BAHIAN SHIRLEY TEMPLE, perfectly mouthing the song's lyrics.

While the Man With Longwoven Locks sings his part, the Shining Woman observes THE LITTLE GIRL'S SUPERDYNE PERFORMANCE

She calls a STAGEHAND over and WHISPERS INTO HIS EAR.

The Stagehand walks back and looks up at Babalu. She's too professional to allow herself to be perturbed by this potential problem. The Stagehand MOTIONS FOR BABALU TO DESCEND. She looks down at him, she ignores him. She continues.

The Stagehand motions VIGOROUSLY now. Babalu is forced to shake her head No! COME DOWN! NO!

The Stagehand turns around. He's given up...

SNATCH!

The ploy's worked! He's got the UPSTAGER in his hands!

He carries her, KICKING AND STRUGGLING like the time she was about to be pitched back into the sea, to the FRONT OF THE STAGE, where he plunks her down next to the Shining Woman.

(Suspicion...)

The Shining Woman lowers the mike to Babalu's height and gently scoots the Girl into position behind it.

CLUELESS NO MORE. Babalu gets it. She's GOT it.

SHE SINGS!

At the end of the song the BOYS turn in formation to the left and march off the way they marched on, drumming.

Babalu reaches up to the Shining Woman for a quick exchange of kisses on both cheeks.

Another is blown to the Man With Longwoven Locks and then she LEAPS from the stage to the ground below, SCAMPERING OFF in the wake of the crew as they disappear through the crowd.

NOW the Shining Woman begins another song, slower, sensual, Brazilian romantic.

THE MOON hangs bright over the square like a Japanese lantern.

FRAMED in the window of the abandoned building, illuminated by the fire burning within the courtyard, and within themselves, Zoom and Madalena look into each other.

They come together and begin to dance...

The people in the square dance...

DANCE is general throughout the world...

MADALENA'S HAND reaches up and touches Zoom's noticeably stronger chest.

MADALENA

What's this?...

ZOOM

That's from pickin' coconuts.

MADALENA

(coyly)

Mmmm. Coconuts eh?

ZOOM

That's right. And yours aren't so bad either!

MADALENA

ZOOM!!!

She turns to walk away.

ZOOM

(hurrying to her)

Why do you always have to be so serious?

MADALENA

It's a serious life.

ZOOM

Okay. Then give me a serious kiss.

MADALENA

Why should I?

Shaking his head slowly and appreciatively...

ZOOM  
Because you are so seriously  
beautiful.

MADALENA  
(quick good humor)  
Serious???

She allows him to approach her lips, turning her face up to meet his. Now each knows the taste and texture of the other.

Zoom draws back just a bit. They begin again to turn to the music.

ZOOM  
What's it like to be an orphan  
Madalena?

MADALENA  
Are you asking for me Zoom...or for  
you?

ZOOM  
For both of us I guess...

MADALENA  
Well... I don't know if you're  
really an orphan when you're grown  
up. But the way I feel...you're  
still blown off the branch...a long  
way from the roots that held your  
life in place.

Sometimes you drift...like you're at the mercy of the wind.  
It takes you this way and that...and all you can do is hope  
that you don't land someplace hard...someplace where you  
can't sink in new roots...

They continue to turn.

ZOOM  
But you gotta have some say in it  
don't you? Some control? Find your  
own way down...?

She stops and looks into Zoom's eyes.

MADALENA  
It's that easy Zoom? Can you  
control the wind?

A beat.

ZOOM  
No Madalena...

Time.

ZOOM (cont'd)  
But I'll ride it with you.

A long pause now, Madalena breathing deeply.

MADALENA  
How far Zoom?

Breathing.

ZOOM  
All the way Madalena.

They move to a protected alcove-like area. Zoom lights a candle. They lay down. They make love.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT: THE ALCOVE - LATER

Zoom and Madalena sleep. Zoom stirs, wakening Madalena.

ZOOM  
What day is today Madalena?

MADALENA  
Night Zoom... It's Saturday  
night...

Zoom considers this, then pulls Madalena back into the fold of his arms. They close their eyes to sleep again.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT: SONNY'S APARTMENT

Sonny and Rosa Maria sleep peacefully together.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT: A BEDROOM

Aunt Cecilia and the Fat Old Rascal sleep peacefully together.

FADE TO BLACK

INT: THE ALCOVE - THE NEXT MORNING

Madalena wakes. Zoom's side of the "bed" is empty. She props herself up and looks around:

MADALENA

Zoom?

She rouses herself and walks out into the courtyard. Early morning light. Smoke still rises from the extinguished campfire.

She looks around.

MADALENA (cont'd)

Zoom?

Nobody there. Out into the street.

MADALENA (cont'd)

Zoom?

Nobody.

She hurries away, casting glances this way and that.

CUT TO:

EXT: A PUBLIC SQUARE ON A BUSY STREET

Babalu is stationed on the corner, serving coffee, pouring from thermoses on the scooter into small plastic cups, chatting amiably with her customers. She's wearing the too-big-for-her KNICKS CAP.

Madalena arrives.

She converses with Babalu. Babalu shakes her head "no" and shrugs (not a clue). Madalena's body language is (frustrated what am I going to do now).

Babalu thinks for a moment. She lights up and holds up a finger. (Hey! I've got an idea!)

When she hears it Madalena lights up too. In gratitude she bends over and plants a kiss on Babalu's cheek.

She taps the side of her (own) head.

Babalu apparently agrees. Yes she's a smart girl. She puts her index finger to the side of her head.

Madalena wags her finger (unh unh...that's not what I meant).

She SNATCHES the cap from Babalu's head and transfers it to her own, to Babalu's not very heartfelt complaints.

She steps behind the scooter and joins Babalu in serving.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT: MOTHER NINA'S HOUSE ON THE ISLAND

Madalena faces Mother Nina at the table.

MADALENA

[Mother... What is it that Zoom is supposed to be learning?]

MOTHER NINA

[What the boy needs to be taught.]

MADALENA

[But that's something that you decided, isn't it?]

MOTHER NINA

[I'm not the one who is teaching him.]

MADALENA

[The man who is teaching him...where can I find him?]

MOTHER NINA

[He comes to me. I don't go to him.]

MADALENA

[But then how did he know to meet Zoom?]

MOTHER NINA

[How should I know?]

MADALENA

[Well you sent him...didn't you?]

MOTHER NINA

[I sent Zoom.]

MADALENA

(getting it under control)

[Mother...let me start again. Is there some way I can find Zoom?]

MOTHER NINA

[The shells...]

She gathers them up and throws them. They scatter into what looks like disorder only to those unable to read them.

MOTHER NINA (cont'd)

[Follow the clouds.]

MADALENA

[Mother... I can't fly...]

MOTHER NINA

[You can...you're an angel...and I see only what is written. You have to discover what is meant...]

CUT TO:

EXT: THE HOUSE - MOMENTS LATER

Muttering to herself on the way out:

MADALENA

[Angel my ass!]

FADE TO BLACK

EXT: THE TRAINING CAMP - DAY

QUIET SOBBING

Zoom stands at the campfire. He's lighting a torch, one end held into the flames. The PILE OF PALM CUTTINGS behind him has grown enormously, the BEADS IN HIS HAIR hang lower.

Time, again, has obviously passed.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT: A "ROOM" IN THE ABANDONED BUILDING

Madalena sits in one the higher stories at a window overlooking the bay. Her arms are folded on the "sill", her head buried in her arms. She is the source of the sobbing we hear.

CUT TO:

ZOOM

He holds the now flaming torch to the base of the great pile of cuttings. The flames catch and spread, growing into an enormous ROARING BONFIRE

CUT TO:

MADALENA

She lifts her tear-stained face and looks out the window. On the other side of the bay A GREAT PLUME OF WHITE SMOKE RISES, melding imperceptibly into the cumulus clouds scudding in from the South Atlantic.

Madalena CATCHES HER BREATH. Her hand goes to her mouth.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT: THE ISLAND CAMP - WATER'S EDGE - EARLY NIGHT

Zoom stands looking out across the bay. In the distant sky

FIREWORKS EXPLODE OVER SALVADOR

A VOICE from behind him:

MADALENA (OC)  
Saturday night Zoom...

He spins around. A dulcet apparition on white sand, hair tousled by seabreeze, vault of stars.

MADALENA (cont'd)  
Saturday night of Carnaval in  
Bahia.

MADALENA CONTINUES  
The biggest celebration on the  
planet. We have something to  
celebrate...

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT: THE OTHER SIDE OF THE BAY - NIGHT

Zoom climbs out into the shallow water and pulls the boat up to shore. Madalena removes her shoes, hitches up her skirt and climbs over. Zoom secures the boat.

Visible from where Zoom and Madalena have landed, at the edge of the water --

A CIRCLE OF WOMEN IN FULL WHITE DRESSES AND WHITE HEADWRAPPINGS

MADALENA  
An offering to Iemanjah. God and  
love together as part of the same  
thing...

Within the circle of women a GIRL, also dressed in white, pushes a BASKET OF FLOWERS out into the water.

Unseen by Zoom and Madalena, it's Babalu.

ZOOM  
Yeah... people's imaginations...

THE BASKET floats away from the shore.

Madalena takes Zoom by the hand and pulls him up into the DREAMWORLD OF CARNIVAL where the costumed multitudes form a SURGING SEA...

...passage for science fiction ships, vastly remodeled sixteen wheelers with musicians on top, broadcasting through millions of watts of sound.

A SHIP hovers through and behind it comes AN ARRAYED ARMY OF DRUMMING INDIANS -- boys in warpaint and Indian headdresses.

MADALENA

The Apaches!

ZOOM

Apaches?!

Out in the middle of the tribe Zoom sees RICKY AND THE CREW. He LIGHTS UP. He cups his hand to his mouth:

ZOOM (cont'd)

(Indian call)

AWAWAWAWAWAWAWA!

The BOYS pass -- and another SHIP looms in. As it draws closer Madalena and Zoom can see that the SINGER on top is the SHINING WOMAN.

The TWO LOVERS turn to each other and come together to DANCE like they did the first time. Slowly turning -- turning slowly in the middle of this ecstasy...

... turning...

Zoom's head comes up from Madalena's shoulder -- his field of vision coming around -- and into it enters a horror...a mask. A costume. A leering skull. A SPECTRE.

It stands out from the celebrants. Rooted in place, the multitude thronging around it. It STARES immovably at Zoom.

Zoom shudders. He stops dancing. He pulls away from Madalena.

ZOOM (cont'd)

My father...he's dying. He's laying  
in a hospital bed. For all I know  
he could be laying in a coffin.

He starts to lose control, move off through the crowd.

Madalena follows him.

MADALENA

Zoom! I have to talk to you!

ZOOM  
I'm going home!

MADALENA  
You can't go home. You haven't  
finished what you came here to  
do...

Zoom stops and turns:

ZOOM  
And I'm not gonna get it finished.  
This is the end of the line.  
Whatever my family had ran out  
before it got to me.

MADALENA  
You mean like believing in  
something?

ZOOM  
Maybe... Maybe I just can't believe  
in what other people believe in.

MADALENA  
(drilling him with her  
eyes)  
That's you Zoom...

He looks at her helplessly.

MADALENA (cont'd)  
Time passes. Fathers become  
grandfathers. Children become  
fathers...

She reaches out and takes Zoom's hand, placing it on her  
belly.

MADALENA (cont'd)  
You're not a child anymore. It's  
time for you to grow up.

He shrinks away from her.

ZOOM  
Well I'm the end of something...

And starts walking.

ZOOM (cont'd)  
Maybe that made me what I am.

MADALENA  
 (calling after him,  
 placing her own hand to  
 her belly)  
 Then what...the HELL...does that  
 make us?

YANK! From behind. Madalena's hair is wrapped in a fist,

A BIG FIST, THE SPECTRE'S FIST, FULL COSTUMED BONES FROM HEAD  
 TO FOOT.

Madalena is practically dangling. The man pulls her around to  
 face him.

SPECTRE  
 MINE!!!

Madalena struggles to pull his hand free as she's dragged  
 away on her heels. People draw back in fear.

When Zoom finally recovers from his shock he reacts, RUNNING  
 AND SHOVING HIS WAY THROUGH THE CROWD after them.

He approaches from behind...

ZOOM  
 HEY SOUPBONE!

WHAM! In the diaphragm. The Spectre's BOOTED FOOT has just  
 licked out to the rear with a piledriver-like punch.

There is no air Zoom's lungs. He falls to the ground clasping  
 himself. The Spectre disappears with Madalena.

A COUPLE OF KINDLY CARNIVAL-GOERS help Zoom to his feet. A  
 few more seconds and he's able to stand up straight.

Back into the crowd, PLUNGING AND SEARCHING, ignoring the  
 recriminations of the people he's knocking over and shoving  
 aside.

A MAD DASH through a Hall of Mirrors.

EXT: CARNIVAL - CONTINUOUS

People think it is just TWO LOVERS pressed up against a wall.

They laugh and smile just feet -- inches away, while the BIG  
 MAN LEANS INTO and KISSES and with a heavy hand CHOKES THE  
 LIFE OUT OF MADALENA -- rudely HIKING UP THE FRONT OF HER  
 SKIRT.

She reaches out to them. They see an arm jerking in the  
 passion of the big man's powerful embrace.

She clutches at his shoulders. It's just passion. He's finally TAKING HIS PLEASURE, hard.

ZOOM emerges from the crowd. He stands for a moment, shocked by what looks like her acquiescence to this obscene lust. Her eyes are closed in apparent ecstasy.

THE SPECTRE, advised as if by radar, looks around to see Zoom standing there agog. He lets Madalena slump to the ground.

Zoom ATTACKS in a rage. But this time there's some choreography there. The choreography of half-trained ineptitude fortified by an avenging spirit. But the avenging spirit isn't strong enough to make it effective.

The Spectre is far more practiced. He kicks and sweeps and cartwheels with deadly efficiency and accuracy. Zoom's consolation is that he sees Madalena pull herself up and struggle away.

Leading the Spectre to SWING A BOOT AGAINST THE SIDE OF ZOOM'S HEAD, sending Zoom flying in a burst of spray.

ZOOM lays on the ground trying to remember who and where he is, what led up to this.

EXT: CARNIVAL - CONTINUOUS

MADALENA runs/limps wildly through the throngs.

EXT: CARNIVAL - CONTINUOUS

THE SPECTRE thrashes everybody out of his way in pursuit.

EXT: CARNIVAL - CONTINUOUS

ZOOM gets up and goes after them both.

EXT: CARNIVAL - CONTINUOUS

A CARNIVAL SHIP ON WHEELS is surrounded by costumed members belonging to this particular carnival block. All are inside a roped-off area with SECURITY BEARS on the lookout.

MADALENA, wild-eyed, makes it to the rope and tries to CRAWL UNDER to the safety of the other side.

To the SECURITY BEARS she looks like a tanked-up crazywoman trying to gatecrash. They block her way. They can't see what's going on in the confusion.

On top of the ship A WOMAN SINGS -- the SHINING WOMAN. She sees the CONFUSION as the huge Spectre knocks people over in his quest for Madalena. She realizes that the Young Woman down there is in deep trouble.

She hands the microphone off to a backup singer and hurriedly yells something into the ear of a Security Man. In a moment Madalena is under the rope and being helped into the ship.

FRUSTRATED! THE SPECTRE turns. ZOOM is right behind him. His rage has been replaced by ice. Zoom simply walks away.

A few steps and he feels something. The Spectre's BIG HAND is splayed across his ass, gripping, the Spectre looking at him, mocking Zoom's inability to do anything about this humiliation.

People stare. The Spectre hangs on for another few moments, then he lets Zoom go.

And Zoom continues on his way, like he's got all the time in the world. That's it...

Down to the boat. Out into the water. He rows.

CUT TO:

OUT IN THE BAY

Heavy swells, the boat riding INCLINING WALLS OF WATER.

A misty rain stings Zoom's eyes and the lights of the city have disappeared from sight.

He looks around, over his shoulder, peering into darkness, trying vainly to see the lights of the island.

He's LOST -- out on the huge bay. For all he knows he could be heading out to open sea.

A WAVE slaps the boat and WATER POURS IN. He starts to panic.

He looses an oar in the SWIRLING WATER and leans out, way out, trying to find it.

Then HELL opens up and the DEVIL HIMSELF ROARS:

MMMMMMHHHHHHHHHHHHH!!! A SHIP'S HORN -- ON TOP OF HIM.

TOTAL VIBRATION. He looks up, and an ENORMOUS SHAPE LOOMS up out of the darkness over him, HUGE, MONSTROUS, and then he's under CHURNING WATER fighting for his life, the hull, foam, confusion...

He surfaces, GASPING horribly for his breath in the turgid waters of the ship's wake, the ten-story bow receding into the blackness.

Now he is utterly alone. Utterly defeated.

He stops treading water. He lays his head back, and sinks, very slowly, beneath the waves - eyes closed - face turned up towards the surface - ghostly - ghastly...

His mouth opens wide -- and then his eyes. They are rolled back in the sockets.

And then they SNAP STRAIGHT AHEAD. Something is floating on the water above him.

His head breaks the surface.

It's a BASKET OF FLOWERS.

A jagged STREAK OF LIGHTNING arcs overhead across the sky and strikes close to the horizon. It FLICKERS and ILLUMINATES a familiar set of hills.

Zoom removes a flower from the basket and kisses it. He ties it into his hair. He swims.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT: A DESERTED BEACH - EARLY MORNING

Zoom lays exhausted on the sand.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT: THE DESERTED BEACH - MORNING

The sun is higher in the sky. Zoom gets up and starts to walk.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT: THE TRAINING CAMP

He arrives. The Gardener regards him with a strange expression. It's the first time that Zoom has seen him with any expression.

The Gardener removes the flower from Zoom's hair. He carries it down to the water.

THE GARDENER

Iemanjah...

He throws it into the waves. It's pulled out to sea.

ZOOM BEGINS TO MOVE. His motions evolve into the dance he saw the Gardener doing that night at Mother Nina's house.

DRUMMING AND SINGING come up in the soundtrack, the music from the opening sequence.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT: THE ISLAND CAMP - NIGHT - HEAVY RAIN

Zoom wakes up under the trees, in the mud. He lifts his head.

No sign of the Gardener. No sign of anything. He puts his head back down and goes back to sleep.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT: THE ISLAND CAMP - THE FOLLOWING MORNING

Zoom wakens again, rising to his feet. He is a MUDMAN, almost unrecognizable. He looks like a demented wino. He leaves.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT: BRIGHT DAY - GATO'S HOUSE

Zoom arrives. He pounds on the door. Nobody answers. He screams:

ZOOM  
GATO!!! GATO!!! WHAT ARE YOU AFRAID  
OF?!!! ARE YOU AFRAID OF THE  
FUTURE?!!! ARE YOU AFRAID OF  
JOE?!!! ARE YOU AFRAID OF ME?!!!  
WHAT ARE YOU AFRAID OF?!!!

He turns and leans back on the door, his chest heaving with emotion. A paper flutters on a nearby post. Zoom walks over, pulls it down, and looks at it.

A title burns in:

"ULYSSES UNBOUND"

EXT: A CROWDED AREA - DAY

A CIRCLE OF SHIRTLESS MEN. Two of them gyre and kick. GATO directs. RICKY and the Boys are part of the circle. MADALENA watches from a second level tier. BABALU is next to her.

A WINO wanders in off the street, a forlorn figure making his way across the open area to the circle, an unwanted interruption to the activity.

A MURMUR goes through the crowd. Music and drumming die out.

A couple of BRUISERS step out to intercept the Intruder. They grab him under the arms and drag him back to the entrance.

A FOOT GOES INTO THE WINO'S ASS. HE IS SPRAWLED ON THE STREET

The crowd laughs. The guys in the circle laugh. The activity starts up again.

AND HERE COMES THE WINO AGAIN. Music and drumming die out again. The crowd murmurs again. The Bruisers look again. They step out and amble easily toward the guy, again.

But this time the Wino does a quick sidestep into the circle, standing isolated, a rotten tooth, the men to either side shying away.

The crowd titters.

A SHOUT:

GATO

[ENOUGH!]

All eyes look to the Master.

GATO (cont'd)

[He hasn't been disrespectful to us. Let's see what he wants.]

The Bruiser with the foot moves into the circle and invites the Wino to play. The offer is accepted.

The Bruiser makes a show of it, playing to the crowd, waving his hand under his nose like this guy's a real stinker.

The crowd laughs.

The Wino, an Emmett Kelly expression of sadness on his face, looks up into them.

Madalena looks down -- her head shaking slightly from side to side like she's trying to understand something.

WHISK! From behind. The Bruiser has SWEPT the Wino off his feet. A HEAP. The crowd loves it. Most of them.

The Bruiser JOINS HIS HANDS OVER HIS HEAD like a victorious boxer. He moves around the circle to receive his acclamation.

WHAM! THE BRUISER'S FEET go out from under him.

THE WINO HAS REACTED

A moment of silence. But then the crowd ERUPTS INTO LAUGHTER at this audacity.

The Bruiser doesn't take it so well. He pulls himself up and moves to stand LORDINGLY over the Wino, GLARING DOWN at a victim whose time is up.

HE LETS THE WINO HAVE IT

But somehow the Wino manages to collapse out of the Bruiser's way and THE BRUISER is on his ass again. The crowd loves it either way. It doesn't matter who plays the fool.

Now, all eyes upon him, the Wino gently edges out of the circle. He walks over to a barrel of water.

He pulls off his dirty cloak and reaching into the barrel he grabs a container and fills it and turning up his mouth he pours the water in, drinking greedily, water cascading.

He shakes braided hair free. He reaches into the barrel and pours more water over a TORSO THAT RIPPLES AND SHINES IN THE SUN.

This time ANOTHER MURMUR passes through the crowd. People turn to each other. They remark wonderingly on this transmutation.

But it's left to Babalu to yell:

BABALU

It's ZOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOM!!!!

He returns to the circle and signals for the music to begin.

THE SKY STEADILY DARKENS as the circle's constituents move in to face him one-by-one. A Baryshnikov, he outclasses them all.

All but one.

He faces his grandfather CHEST-TO-CHEST, a hair's breadth of separation. He stares (Sonny Liston) into Gato.

ZOOM

Ricky... Would you help me here please.

Ricky comes over and stands uncertainly beside the two.

Rain begins to fall.

ZOOM (cont'd)

Tell him that if a chain holds strong at both ends...then that chain is strong in the middle too. Tell him that...

Ricky does so.

ZOOM (cont'd)  
 Tell him that I don't know  
 everything he knows...but I know  
 what makes a person strong. And I  
 know that my father was  
 strong...for me. Tell him that...

Ricky does so.

ZOOM (cont'd)  
 Ask him if he'll do for my  
 father...what my father did for his  
 son. Ask him to help make a life.  
 Ask him to come...

Ricky addresses Gato in low tones. Gato turns to walk away.

ZOOM GRABS HIM BY THE ARM, ROUGHLY. HE SWINGS THE OLD MAN  
 AROUND TO FACE HIM. THE OLD MAN'S EYES BURN.

ZOOM  
 You don't just turn and walk away  
 like that!

Gato looks down at Zoom's hand on his arm. He looks back up  
 at Zoom. Ricky translates.

GATO  
 [That's what your father did to  
 me.]

Gato turns to walk away again. This time Zoom lets him,  
 calling out to him in rising volume as the distance between  
 them increases:

ZOOM  
 Now I get it. That's what it's  
 really all about! Instead of  
 admitting that you were a lonely  
 man...you had to play the noble  
 ancestors card. Not even that. You  
 had to bluff. And it took almost  
 twenty years for you to get called  
 on it. And then you come up a loser  
 and you're still tryin' to look  
 like you won. But you're not  
 playin' with money...you're playin'  
 with lifetime. And what's  
 left...you're gonna throw that away  
 too! You can't blame that on my  
 father! There could be hours...or  
 years...and you could make the  
 difference!

(MORE)

ZOOM(cont'd)

MAYBE WE'RE NOT SO DIFFERENT AFTER ALL! THE PAST DIDN'T MEAN ANYTHING TO ME...AND THE FUTURE DOESN'T MEAN ANYTHING TO YOU! IF IT DID...MAYBE THERE MIGHT BE ONE FOR YOU AND YOUR SON...AND FOR ME AND MY FATHER!!!

Ricky is there to make sure Gato understands. Gato disappears around a corner without looking back.

From offscreen:

MADALENA (OC)  
And your child Zoom...?

Zoom looks. Madalena stands pathetic, rainsoaked.

MADALENA (cont'd)  
Is there a future for your child?  
And me? Is there a future for me?

Zoom watches her, frozen. She turns and leaves. He hesitates for a few moments, looking after Gato, not sure what to do.

INTO THE STREET. Desolate, wet, empty.

HE RUNS, searching frantically, desperately, calling out her name like Marlon Brando screaming "STELLA!!!".

HE ROAMS THE CITY, passing the now familiar places.

HE RETURNS TO THE ABANDONED BUILDING. There's nobody there. It's closed up, being rebuilt.

HE'S ALONE AGAIN. Given up. He pulls a tattered airplane ticket from his pocket and looks at it.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT: A SALVADOR BUS STOP - DAY

Zoom stands waiting for the bus that will take him to the airport. He's isolated from the other people around him, avoiding him like people avoid bums on the subway.

THE BUS pulls up and Zoom gets on. We follow the bus to the next stop.

Zoom gets off. He's scrounging uselessly through empty pockets.

No bus fare.

HE PANHANDLES. It's no use. People are afraid of him.

He spots a MAN talking on a public telephone. The man's head is hidden under the telephone's plastic shell. The EXPENSIVE WATCH on the man's wrist isn't.

Zoom creeps up and SNATCHES the watch away.

The man DROPS the phone and steps WIDE-EYED out into the open.

ROBBED MAN  
 (slowly, incredulous)  
 You!... I remember you! The boy  
 from the bus!

He looks Zoom up and down.

ROBBED MAN (cont'd)  
 You've changed... I wish I could  
 say it was for the better...

ZOOM  
 (suddenly remorseful,  
 offering the watch back,  
 looking down in shame,  
 unable to meet the man's  
 eyes)  
 Yeah... I guess I have. I needed  
 bus fare to the airport.

ROBBED MAN  
 I didn't know they accepted watches  
 as payment.

The Robbed Man accepts the proffered watch back and slips it into his pocket. He extracts a bill from his wallet.

ROBBED MAN (cont'd)  
 This isn't a lot...but they might  
 have trouble changing it on the  
 bus. If you'll buy yourself a T-  
 shirt, some shorts, and some  
 inexpensive shoes, you should have  
 enough left over for a bus ride and  
 a little something to eat...

He holds the bill out to Zoom. Zoom doesn't move to accept it.

ROBBED MAN (cont'd)  
 Go on...

Zoom reaches into his own pocket and pulls out jetsam, unfolding it and looking at it. It reads, barely legible:

Sonny Green Promotions

He extends it to the Robbed Man.

ZOOM

Okay...but you take this. And write  
and tell me where to pay you back.

ROBBED MAN

I'm not buying you a plane ticket  
here you know...

ZOOM

It's almost the same thing...

The Man smiles and accepts the tradeoff. Zoom accepts the  
bill.

ROBBED MAN

Have a good life...

ZOOM

Yeah... You too...

FADE TO  
EXTENDED BLACK

The sound of JET ENGINES slowly metamorphoses into the sound  
of a ROARING SUBWAY CAR...

FADE UP ON

ZOOM ON THE SUBWAY

He gets off at the 125th Street station and heads up the  
stairs to his past life. It is late evening.

The metal shutters are pulled down in front of Cana Brava.  
Most of the other businesses on the street are still open.

Zoom unlocks the door to the apartment and walks slowly and  
fearfully up the stairs. He quietly enters the living room  
from the rear. In the flickering half-light his father sits  
in front of the television, the volume turned down low. Zoom  
stands unnoticed for a minute or so, watching the back of the  
Knicks cap on his father's head. Then:

ZOOM

(very softly)

Dad...

His father slowly rises and turns in his seat. Zoom is  
momentarily stunned by the change in his father's face. Then  
he realizes that he's not looking at his father. He's looking  
at his grandfather.

Joe enters from the kitchen, using a walker. He's smiling like Zoom has never seen. Zoom runs to his father and embraces him.

Gato gets up and embraces them both.

CUT TO:

INT: THE KITCHEN TABLE

Joe and Gato and Zoom and Sonny and Rosa Maria dine.

ZOOM

Yeah...but peanut butter and jelly, morning, noon, and night?

JOE

We gotta be real careful with the food budget. Besides...it's all we can get him to eat. He's crazy about it.

ZOOM

What's he used to eating?

JOE

Beans and rice...mostly.

ZOOM

Then we better not say anything. The only thing we want cookin' with gas around here is the stove.

SONNY

Hey! That's your grandfather you're talking about!

ZOOM

You feelin' left out Sonny? Did I ever tell you how glad I was you got out of the habit of stopping by Sylvia's before comin' over here on TV nights?

ROSA MARIA REARS UP, A VALKYRIE, ready to kill. Sonny throws his hands up to protect his face.

SONNY

HE MEANS SYLVIA'S SOUL FOOD RESTAURANT ON LENOX AVENUE!!!

He looks imploringly at Zoom.

ZOOM

Yeah that's what I meant I swear!

Rosa Maria sits down slowly, continuing to scour Sonny under the glow of her menacing glare.

ROSA MARIA  
(suspicious)  
What's the problem with Sylvia's?

ZOOM  
Nothing. It's just that Sonny couldn't walk out of there without a quadruple order of redbeans. A double for him and double for Dad. I don't know how they could stand sittin' next to each other on the couch!

A few tense beats...

ROSA MARIA  
Well you should try sleeping with him!

They all breathe again.

ROSA MARIA (cont'd)  
And if you had some women living in this house you men wouldn't have to eat like this!

SONNY  
Colonel Sanders doesn't complain when you don't put the toilet seat back down...

JOE  
I'm with her Sonny. It feels good having a woman's dresses hanging in the closet!

SONNY  
(needling)  
I bet you didn't expect to hear that when you got back Zoom!

Joe takes it gracefully.

JOE  
It's been too long old amigo...

SONNY  
Why do I always have to be your old amigo?

JOE  
You ever seen a baby with hair like yours?

SONNY

I seen plenty of bald ones. You givin' them a hard time? Rosa's the one with the inside information. Ask her what she thinks.

JOE

She's prejudiced!

SONNY

(turning to face her)  
You been out burnin' crosses again Rosa?

JOE

She's in love with you.

SONNY

Well...being in love with somebody an' agreein' with them ain't exactly the same thing you know...

ZOOM

(butting in)  
It's just a state of mind anyway...isn't it?

JOE

Love?

ZOOM

Age.

SONNY

What the hell do you think they invented Viagra for?!

ROSA MARIA

Do you...

SONNY

OF COURSE NOT! I'm saying that age isn't a state of mind. And it's not a number. It's a collection of events. And that makes it a very relative thing.

ZOOM

Like Einstein?

SONNY

Exactly!

ZOOM

Relative to what?

SONNY

Your waistline for one thing. You get hardening of the arteries below it and you're happy. You get 'em above it and you're dead.

ZOOM

What if you don't have a waistline to be relative to?

SONNY

(patting his ampleness)  
Ya die happy!

He takes Rosa Maria's hand tenderly in his and goes on:

SONNY (cont'd)

But you need someone's help for that! You better get out and find somebody and get it in before you lose yours Zoom!

But you need someone's help for that! You better get out and find somebody and get it in before you lose yours Zoom!

ZOOM

I have Sonny...

ROSA MARIA

Zoom! It must be the stress!

SONNY

I'm talking about his waistline Rosa!

ZOOM

I'm talking about a girl...somebody I love...

Several beats of silence...

JOE

You just got back.

ZOOM

A south side girl. And I'm not talkin' Jersey City.

SONNY

That's a good start Zoom...but you gotta be realistic.

He warms to the matter at hand.

SONNY (cont'd)  
I've had girlfriends all over the  
world...

Rosa Maria withdraws hers.

SONNY (cont'd)  
And long distance romances never  
work out. There's four thousand  
miles of ocean waves and jungle  
vines between you and whoever this  
girl is...not to mention  
headhunters.

ZOOM  
What do you think they invented  
airplanes for Sonny?

SONNY  
They're no protection against the  
local man-eaters. And two times in  
the air doesn't exactly qualify you  
as a card-carryin' member of the  
jet-set. My good money says you'll  
find something closer to home as  
soon as you get sick of datin' your  
right hand.

ZOOM  
I'll cover that bet.

JOE  
You'll lose it son. You're being  
romantic.

ZOOM  
No Dad...  
(several beats)  
You're being a grandfather.

Sonny SLAPS the table like he's won a bet.

SONNY  
A GRANDFATHER!!! NOW tell me who  
the old man is!

The others are quiet.

JOE  
Son...I'd like to help. But the  
shop's been closed. I haven't been  
able to do it. Sonny's spent so  
much helpin' me out he hasn't had  
enough to pay his own bills.

ROSA MARIA  
You could do it Zoom.

Zoom looks at her uncomprehendingly. They all do.

ROSA MARIA (cont'd)  
You could get the shop running again! You could put real food back on the table! You could buy an airplane ticket...two for the return trip! Maybe you'd even have enough left over for a wedding ring.

JOE  
Well...

ZOOM  
How do I do it?

SONNY  
A GRAND RE-OPENING! You burn shoe leather...or rubber or plastic or whatever the hell they put on the bottom of sneakers these days. You let your old clientele know that you're back. You talk to every guy beating on a drum from Washington Heights to Central Park to the Battery. You talk to every guy that ain't beating on a drum in every place you haven't gone yet. You hit the neighborhoods...the little grocery stores and carry-outs. You hit businesses and consulates. And while you're at it you might even wanna take your grandfather out and let him see what a concrete jungle looks like!

ROSA MARIA  
Wha d'ya say Zoom?

Zoom stands up and looks at the others seated around the table.

ZOOM  
I'd say...it's on. I'd say...I'm IN!

JOE  
I'd say...we're in it together!

ZOOM  
And I'd say...you're RIGHT!

ROSA MARIA  
 Would you say boy Zoom? Or girl?

ZOOM  
 (sitting back down)  
 I don't know. I think it'd be  
 like...too early to tell.

ROSA MARIA  
 I mean what do you want?

A couple of seconds...

ZOOM  
 Girl.

SONNY  
 You sound awfully sure about that.

ZOOM  
 No contest. Boys are a pain-in-the-  
 ass.

Joe affectionately pulls Zoom's head to his own.

JOE  
 Yeah. But they grow out of it  
 though.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT: THE APARTMENT - LATER THAT NIGHT

Dark and silent. Zoom is looking at the mask.

JOE (OC)  
 God helps those who help  
 themselves...

ZOOM  
 (turning to look at  
 his father)  
 Which God?

JOE  
 You'll have to ask Him...  
 (nodding)  
 ...or Her.

Iemanjah hangs facing her husband on the other side of the  
 hallway.

JOE (cont'd)  
 Son... We're making a new start.  
 We're gonna be real partners now.  
 (MORE)

JOE(cont'd)

Cana Brava is a heavy name. Maybe  
you got another idea...

ZOOM

What's so heavy about it?

JOE

It's a lie...

(pause)

In the old days it was used for a  
lot of the big sugarcane  
plantations. The owners in the  
manor houses didn't want the people  
they forced to sweat in the fields  
for it to keep any of it for  
themselves.

(pause)

It means "Dangerous Cane".

ZOOM

Why'd you decide to use it?

JOE

I was takin' back what was ours...

Zoom's looking at his father...

ZOOM

Then we're keepin' it.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT: ZOOM'S BEDROOM

Zoom tosses and turns, trying to get to sleep. He hears  
laughter from the living room, then drumbeating and a  
familiar yell:

RICKY RICARDO (O.C.)

Babaloooooooooooooooooooo!

FADE TO BLACK

A title burns in:

"DR. EINSTEIN COMES HOME TO ROOST"

EXT: CENTRAL PARK - DAY

Bicyclers, joggers, rollerbladers, picnickers. The beautiful  
and the weird.

Zoom and Gato hand out fliers to whoever meets their caprice,  
Gato going out of his way to make sure that every attractive  
woman in the vicinity is informed.

When he sees that Zoom is looking questionably askance at him he indicates by way of explanation the fourth finger of his left hand:

GATO

Jorge.

CUT TO:

EXT: THE UNITED NATIONS GENERAL ASSEMBLY BUILDING - DAY

Zoom and Gato are on their way out.

CUT TO:

INT: A HALLWAY IN AN OFFICE BUILDING

Zoom and Gato walk down a hallway looking at the names on the doors. They find one that seems to be what they're looking for, and enter.

INT: AN OFFICE - CONTINUOUS

A PRETTY RECEPTIONIST sits behind a big desk, soft muzak playing in the background. A MAN is occupied PLACING BOUND NOTEBOOKS up on a shelf. ANOTHER MAN is SHUFFLING PAPERS on the receptionist's desk.

RECEPTIONIST

May I help you?

The man looking at papers on the desk looks up.

AFRICAN 1

Hey Sam! Look! It's the nasty boy!

AFRICAN 2 turns around and assumes the look of one who has just swallowed a bug.

Zoom is like (I don't fuckin' believe he just said that!).

He looks at Gato.

ZOOM

Hey Gato! Look! It's the dancing Watusi Brothers!

The comment falls like death.

AFRICAN 1

(deadly serious)

Actually...we're Kongos...and we aren't brothers.

(MORE)

AFRICAN 1(cont'd)

But don't let that worry you...the derogatory sense in which you meant it was clearly understood.

Zoom looks down, then back up:

ZOOM

Being an asshole can be a pretty tough habit to break sometimes...

Jumping to clarify himself:

ZOOM (cont'd)

I mean me...not you!

The Receptionist seems to be busily involved in her paperwork. But casting a glance at her Zoom realizes that he's used a not completely socially acceptable word.

African 1 senses his alarm and takes a modicum of pity:

AFRICAN 1

She's new here. She probably doesn't even know what it means.

RECEPTIONIST

(without looking up)

I know one when I see one...

(now she does)

...and you don't look like such an asshole to me.

Zoom flusters.

ZOOM

Thank you. You don't either...

Meanwhile Gato's attention has been caught by several pieces of ARTWORK up on the shelf where African 2 had been filing.

There's more filing to be put up.

AFRICAN 2

(to Gato's back)

Excuse me. Excuse me! EXCUSE ME!

Not a blink from Gato. It looks like rudeness. African 2 turns to Zoom:

AFRICAN 2 (cont'd)

What's his problem?!

ZOOM

The lingo.

African 2 nods uncertainly and a tap and a smile and Gato solicitously moves aside with a small apology. Peace.

AFRICAN 1  
Well Mr. ...

ZOOM  
Zoom.

AFRICAN 1  
Mr. Zoom?

ZOOM  
You can call me Zumbi.

AFRICAN 1  
Well...Zumbi. To what do we owe the pleasure of your visit? Are you here on official business?

ZOOM  
Betcher booty!

He hands African 1 a flyer and holds out the bag he was carrying, opening it wide.

ZOOM (cont'd)  
Promo... See if you can find anything you like...you know...yer style.

African 1 roots around and comes up with something.

AFRICAN 1  
TSHALA!!!

He holds it up like a prize.

African 1 removes the currently playing muzak CD from the CD player, pops the new one in, and

PARTY!

Until...a DOOR to a back office is FLUNG OPEN and an older, SCOWLING MAN in an expensive suit emerges.

African 1 cuts the tune. It's

THE BOSS  
What is going on out here?! This is no place for carrying on! There will be DECORUM and DIGNITY in this office!  
(glares all around)  
(MORE)

THE BOSS(cont'd)

Now get back to work...or you'll  
all be on the next plane out!  
(looking at Zoom)  
YOU TOO!

Muttered, but not so softly that it can't be distinctly heard  
by all in the environs:

FROM OFF CAMERA

Asshole...

The Boss, the Consular Gentlemen, the Receptionist, Zoom, all  
turn to look at the expletive's only possible source, quietly  
perusing the artwork...

RECEPTIONIST

I thought he didn't speak English!

ZOOM

So did I!

CUT TO:

EXT: THE STREET - A FEW MINUTES LATER

Zoom has his arm flung around Gato's shoulders.

ZOOM

I think she liked you!

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT: 125TH STREET - DAY

Sonny makes his customary way along 125th Street, his eyes  
riveted to two YOUNG WOMEN approaching on the sidewalk. He's  
busting to turn his head as they pass, but he manages to  
handle himself well -- heroically allowing only his EYEBALLS  
to follow.

Until the Women pass. Then his head SWIVELS, one hundred and  
eighty degrees. Ah! sublime...

POW! He's RAMMED from the opposite direction.

THE VISION is replaced by MELVIS.

SONNY

What the hell is this?! Beauty and  
the Beast?!

MELVIS

Well Sonny...maybe you shoulda been  
watchin' where you were goin'!

SONNY

You're a good reason not to!

MELVIS

Well Sonny...I'm glad I ran into ya. I'm a little short this week an'...

SONNY

(interrupting)

An' you're gonna STAY that way! Melvis, I've handed over enough cash for you to buy controlling interest in Seagram's! And all I've ever gotten for it is your eighty-six proof breath tellin' me that you are a little goddamn SHORT this week! I've got friction burns on my hands from reachin' into my pockets for you!

MELVIS

I know Sonny...but I'm gonna pay ya back...

SONNY

With WHAT?! Bottle caps! Companheiro, it's time for you to switch to glue!!!

CUT TO:

EXT: A HARLEM STREET - DAY

Melvis works - after his own fashion - gluing up posters for Sonny.

FADE TO BLACK

EXT: 125TH STREET - DAY

A PARKED NEW YORK POLICE DEPARTMENT TRUCK with BLUE TRAFFIC BARRIERS in the bed.

Men unload the barriers while a COP directs traffic around the truck.

Into frame walk THE OLD RASCALS. STEDICAM along with them down the sidewalk to CANA BRAVA RECORDS, where a big banner:

GRAND RE-OPENING

is strung across the front of the NEWLY PAINTED STORE.

THE RASCALS noisily enter.

INT: CANA BRAVA RECORDS - CONTINUOUS

They go dead silent.

Joe and Gato and Rosa Maria hang around gloomily inside an EMPTY RECORD STORE. No CD's. No tapes. No vinyl. No musical instruments. No nothin'.

CUT TO:

EXT: A HARLEM STREET - DAY

Sonny's humping it down the street. He passes a postered spot and stops to check it out. What's up there generally follows the routine manner of foursquare vertical/horizontal...

With the exception of ONE GROUP OF POSTERS which has been thrown up at half-assed haphazard random crazy angles, unglued corners curling out.

All of THESE posters say: SONNY GREENE PROMOTIONS

Sonny's lips tighten.

SONNY

God-damn Melll...vissss!!!

CUT TO:

INT: CANA BRAVA RECORDS

FAT OLD RASCAL

Mano! What's going on? This looks like the grand opening of a funeral parlor!

JOE

The new stock was supposed to be here a long time ago...

FAT OLD RASCAL

Where's the warehouse?

JOE

Jersey.

The Fat Old Rascal looks at his watch.

FAT OLD RASCAL

They must think New Jersey's in another time zone. Where's Zoom?

Joe crooks his thumb toward the back of the store.

JOE

It was Gato's turn to cook last night.

FAT OLD RASCAL  
 What's the matter...boy can't  
 handle his beans?

As they speak THE DELIVERY TRUCK is pulling up out front. Our old friend the DELIVERY MAN is behind the wheel.

Joe yells back:

JOE  
 IT'S SHOWTIME ZOOM!

The Delivery Man gets out and walks to the back of the truck, SWINGING THE DOOR OPEN, leaving only HIS LEGS visible at the left side of the display window as he unloads.

SOUND OF RUNNING WATER

Zoom runs out, drying his hands on his pants. He looks out through the display window and sees:

THE DELIVERY MAN closing the doors at the back of the truck, walking around, getting back in, firing up the engine.

Then he sees:

THE TRUCK NOSING OUT INTO THE TRAFFIC

ZOOM  
 HEY!

He BOLTS out the door and looks around.

No delivery. Nothing there.

THE TRUCK is pulling away.

ZOOM JUMPS IN FRONT OF IT

THE DELIVERY MAN HITS THE BRAKES HARD AND LEANS OUT THE WINDOW

ZOOM  
 Where you goin'?! Aren't you gonna  
 unload the stuff?!

DELIVERY MAN  
 I just did.

ZOOM  
 (looking around)  
 Well... WHERE THE HELL IS IT!

DELIVERY MAN  
 That's none of my business.

ZOOM

What do you MEAN it's none of your  
business?! Of COURSE it's your  
business!!!

Zoom SQUINTS up the sidewalk. A couple of blocks up maybe,  
hard to make out through the foot traffic obscuring his view,  
he sees what looks like PEOPLE DUCKWALKING AWAY WITH LARGE  
BOXES.

DELIVERY MAN

I am a delivery man. This is a  
delivery truck. When the shit is  
delivered...my business is done!

ZOOM

Are you fuckin' crazy?! Somebody's  
gotta SIGN for that shit! You don't  
just give it to the first nigga  
come coolstruttin' up the sidewalk!

DELIVERY MAN

I didn't.

He holds up the clipboard.

DELIVERY MAN (cont'd)

I gave it to the same nigga you  
authorized to sign for it the last  
time I was here.

Case closed. He grinds the truck into gear and pulls away.  
Zoom is left standing empty-handed out in the traffic.

A second of hesitation, and

HE BURSTS OUT OF THE STARTING BLOCKS

Walter Payton/Jim Brown - clipping shoulders - dodging  
pedestrians and cars. People stop, looking for the police on  
his heels.

After several blocks his lungs give out. Throwing his hands  
into the air he turns around and walks slowly back to the  
shop.

Joe is standing out front when he gets there.

JOE

What's up Zoom?

ZOOM

(barely audible)  
Our ticket...

Joe can read in Zoom's face Zoom's take on the reality of what has just been said.

THEY STAND THERE TOGETHER

Separated from time, unable to touch the flux of life around them...

TWO GHOSTS

...brought back to the temporal plane only when the barriers of their lonely private underworld are smashed by

SONNY!

EXPLODIN' onto the scene with a package of posters!

SONNY  
WHAT'S UP JOE!

Yo ZOOM! I need help! I gotta get these up now! I'd do it myself but the promotion's happening and I GOTTA take care of stuff. (pause) I know it's your day but it won't take long...and this'll be great advertising for you too.

A quiet imploring appeal:

SONNY (cont'd)  
You're the only one who knows the spots.

JOE  
Help him out Zoom. I'll hold things down here.

ZOOM  
What else can you do? They already been held up...

CUT TO:

EXT: A HARLEM CORNER

The old life. Zoom sets the glue bucket and package of posters down on the sidewalk. He turns his face to the sky and closes his eyes.

KICK! CRASH! Rumble...

The bucket's rolling down the sidewalk, oozing glue. An IRATE PASSERBY is leaving sticky footprints behind.

PISSED-OFF  
 KEEP YOUR GODDAMN SHIT OUT OF THE  
 MIDDLE OF THE GODDAMN SIDEWALK  
 BOY!!!

The man disappears down the sidewalk, fulminating.

ZOOM lets his knees buckle. He sinks to the ground and leans back against the building he was about to poster.

He begins to cry. He buries his head in his knees. His shoulders heave...

Cruising slowly along the curb, A LATE-MODEL CAR with dark windows comes to rest in front the spot where Zoom squats. He looks up and uses his forearm to wipe the snot from his nose.

CLICK, CLICK, CLICK.

Two back doors and the front door on the passenger's side open. Out pile...

GANGSTAS  
 They form a semicircle and stare down hard at the distraught kid and his bucket of spilled glue. Gangsta 2 steps forward:

GANGSTA 2  
 You're a mess!

Zoom rises to his feet and backs away.

BUMP! Into somebody on the sidewalk blocking the path behind him.

He turns around, and comes face-to-face with the Kid Who Signed Twice For Cana Brava's Deliveries.

The others encircle him. Looking around, he addresses them:

ZOOM  
 You know...you can tell fools by the company they keep.

He turns back around to face the Kid:

Do you work out?

KID  
 What?

ZOOM  
 Do you work out?

KID  
 (bad)  
 Yeah...

ZOOM  
 Hard? Do you work out hard?

KID  
 Yeah. I work out real hard.

He steps to the next Gangsta in the circle:

ZOOM  
 What about you? Do you work out?

KID  
 Yeah...

Likewise, around the perimeter.

He steps up to Gangsta 2, out in the middle.

ZOOM  
 I bet you work out harder than any  
 of 'em. Does your butt smoke while  
 you're workin' out?

GANGSTA 2  
 What?

ZOOM  
 Does yo' butt smoke while yo'  
 workin' out?

GANGSTA 2  
 (threatening)  
 Explain yourself.

ZOOM  
 Only fools would be stupid enough  
 to keep company...

Looking at the Kid Who Signed Twice:

ZOOM (cont'd)  
 ...with another fool who is so  
 fucking stupid he's practically  
 under arrest for writin' his own  
 name down on a list of the shit  
 he's stealin'...

Looking around:

ZOOM (cont'd)  
 And only a fool trusts a  
 backstabber not to stab HIM in the  
 back too if that means he can get  
 himself a better deal...

Back to Gangsta 2:

ZOOM (cont'd)  
 And that means ASSES...workin' out  
 so HARD in the shower room on  
 Riker's Island that they're gonna  
 be SMOKIN' IF I DON'T GET MY SHIT  
 BACK!

The WINDOW on the car's driver's side glides silently down,  
 revealing GANGSTA 1 sitting magisterially behind the wheel.

GANGSTA 1  
 Very brave Zumbi. But sometimes the  
 difference between a brave man and  
 a fool is very small...and it can  
 change depending on your point of  
 view. From where I'm sitting...it  
 looks like YOU'RE the fool. But  
 this is a little corner of America  
 Zumbi...land of the free...home of  
 the brave. You're free to say  
 anything you want...if you're brave  
 enough...or fool enough. It's also  
 the land of opportunity. So I'm  
 giving you one...to defend  
 yourself.

THE HARLEM HOUSE OF SAINTS SIGN hangs over the circle -- AN  
 OBSERVER UNDER A DOUBLE-BLADED AXE.

GANGSTA 1'S HAND slips a CD into the player.

GANGSTA 1 (cont'd)  
 Leeeeeeeeeeet's RUMBLE!

HIS HAND pushes PLAY.

A HARD-PUMPIN' REMAKE OF MUHAMMAD ALI BLACK SUPERMAN thrusts  
 from the car's mighty stereo system.

Gangsta 1 nods to Gangsta 2, who moves in with confidence.

ZOOM SPINS AND FLIPS AND GYRES AND CARTWHEELS. Gangsta 2  
 limps painfully back to the circle's perimeter.

ANOTHER NOD FROM GANGSTA 1. Another Gangsta moves in.

Likewise.

Successive nods until they've all been stung...

SILENCE! The car's mighty stereo system goes quiet.

CLICK!

THE FINAL CAR DOOR OPENS. GANGSTA 1 GETS OUT. HE STEPS INTO THE CIRCLE. HE'S HOLDING A GUN. HE RAISES IT.

GANGSTA 1

What are you gonna do about THIS  
Bruce Lee?

A DRUMROLL -- like a battery strike.

A FIGURE appears on the roof of the car. It pauses for the merest fraction of a second - then it leaps - flying.

A KICK and Gangsta 1's pistol ARCS FROM THE CIRCLE.

The FIGURE lands like a cat in the enclosed area,

A MINIATURE NINJA READY TO RUMBLE

THREE MORE SMALL FIGURES VAULT IN, facing outward around Zoom like cowboys around a wagon train.

Or maybe more like Indians. THEY'RE IN WARPAINT.

A GANGSTA

The pygmy patrol?

It's RICKY AND THE CREW

Zoom looks at them -- fairy tale figures somehow incorporated into his real world. He doesn't get a chance to figure it out.

THE GANGSTAS MOVE IN AGAIN

They are NO MATCH for the combined ACROBATIC ASSKICKING POWER of ZOOM and the PAINTED BOYS.

Some flee. Some are left semiconscious and groaning. Most are sprawled out cold.

The COP who'd been directing traffic earlier makes the scene, shoving his way through AN EVER GROWING CROWD.

He is set upon by anxious witnesses eager to give their version of what transpired.

Zoom and Ricky look at each other. Ricky gets it out first:

RICKY  
What are you doing here?

ZOOM  
I LIVE here! What the hell are YOU  
doing here?

POSTERS from SONNY'S BROWN PAPER PACKAGE are scattered around  
the sidewalk.

Ricky picks one up and gives it to Zoom...

Sonny Greene Promotions  
and  
CANA BRAVA RECORDS  
Present  
TIMBALADA!

...who stares into it as if it were a talisman.

Zoom flaps the poster at Sonny.

SONNY  
That was supposed to be a surprise.

ZOOM  
It was.

Zoom recovers enough sense to be cognizent that SONNY, ROSA  
MARIA, JOE, GATO, RHAKEEM and the THE RASCALS have arrived  
and are all staring at him with as much wonderment on their  
faces as he has on his.

ZOOM (cont'd)  
You're a fight promoter Sonny. What  
are you doing with music?

And of all the bands in all the world...how did you ever walk  
into THIS one?

SONNY  
I didn't. They walked into me.  
Their agent called me out of the  
blue.

ZOOM  
Why you?

SONNY  
Hell if I know. Why don't you ask  
him yourself?  
(pointing)  
He's right over there.

Zoom steps out for a look down the street.

He sees a CARNIVAL SHIP on sixteen wheels. Beside it he sees the Robbed Man.

SONNY (cont'd)

I booked 'em into the Apollo. I figured it'd be great publicity for you and your dad...

(pause)

The parade was Rhakeem's idea.

Zoom sees an ORCHESTRA OF PAINTED DRUMMERS arrayed before the Ship, a PAINTED BAND on top.

He sees, presiding, THE MAN WITH LONGWOVEN LOCKS, A PAINTED VON KARAJAN, his drumstick a BATON held up at the ready...

Zoom looks infinitely happy...

But then a TROUBLED LOOK crosses his face. Rosa Maria notices.

MADALENA

What is it Zoom? What's wrong?

ZOOM

Something's missing...

And then, peeking around from behind the leg of one of the ever growing multitude, Zoom sees BABALU'S BIG BROWN EYES BEAMING UP AT HIM. She steps out. ZOOM SWEEPS HER INTO THE AIR.

ZOOM (cont'd)

BA... BA... LOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOO!

The BATON comes down as Babalu cups her hand to Zoom's ear. She whispers:

BABALU

She's waiting for you...

And Timbalada HITS IT. An ANTHEM!

NEW YORK CITY pours out onto 125th, dancing in the street, on balconies, in windows, everywhere as far as the eye can see.

A YELLOW CAB arrives, pulling as far as it can get into the mayhem.

The TURBANED FELLOW is at the wheel. A door opens and fares AFRICAN 1 and AFRICAN 2 emerge, dancing their way into the crowd.

The TURBANED FELLOW tries to back out but there's no way; he's closed in. He gives up, gets out, and gets his funky turbaned ass down.

AUNT CECILIA is there. FOXY LADY is there. MUHAMMAD ALI is there. JACKIE CHAN is there. GEORGE FOREMAN is there.

The DELIVERY MAN is there.

ON THE OTHER SIDE OF THE STREET, standing under the Harlem House of Saints sign, LOOMING over everybody else around him, Zoom sees the GARDENER. The Big Man is resplendant in a white tropical suit and matching white fedora. He sees Zoom staring. He winks.

ZOOM looks around quickly (did you guys see that?!). When he looks back the shop sign is waving as if from an errant gust of wind...

MELVIS makes his way unsteadily through the crowd.

MELVIS

Sonny! Hey Sonny! Ya got my money?

SONNY

Your money!!! For WHAT?!

The light in Melvis's eyes extinguishes and he turns to walk away, the only miserable face in a sea of joy. Sonny calls to him:

SONNY (cont'd)

MELVIS!

Melvis comes around slowly. Emmett Kelly's older, more miserable brother.

SONNY (cont'd)

(soft tones of  
explanation)

I said I wasn't gonna pay you 'til  
Saturday.

Melvis lights up like a supernova.

MELVIS

But Sonny...today IS Saturday!

A light comes on in Rosa Maria's face too.

SONNY

Yeah?

Sonny reaches into his pocket and extends a few bills to his old friend.

SONNY (cont'd)  
Well you know Melvis...

He puts an arm around Rosa Maria's waste and pulls her in close.

SONNY (cont'd)  
I got a feeling that everyday is  
gonna be Saturday from now on!

Rosa Maria faints.

OVER TO GATO

He's holding the berimbau from the opening sequence. THE HEAD AT THE TOP looks a lot like Zoom.

Babalu wonders out loud:

BABALU  
What kind of magic was it...that  
made all this possible?

The Old Crone from the apartment over the Harlem House of Saints is standing next to her.

CRONE  
It wasn't magic. It was something  
stronger than that... It was faith!

And the camera pulls up, back and away from the celebration on 125th Street. It skims with lightning velocity over sea and jungle, flying, until it arrives in one of the favelas of Salvador, Bahia. There's a celebration there too, on a much smaller scale.

An old radio is propped in the window of one of the shantytown houses, and in the dirt street out front the kids are dancing and playing -- under the contented Mona Lisa smile of Madalena. The music is the same.

The camera pulls back again, up, up, and away into the sky, everything diminishing below in the distance, the camera moving higher and higher and further and further out until we can see the Earth itself, shining blue, hanging in the blackness of space...

Super on Screen:

WE ALL HAVE CHAINS TO BREAK

FADE OUT:

THE END