

THE CHROME COTILLION

Screenplay by
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Rough Premise by
Adam Amirian
(one of the actual dancers)

"There are shortcuts to happiness, and dancing is one of them."
Vicki Baum

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FADE IN:

CAPTION: *In 1990 Nashville, a group of LGBTQ dancers changed society, using only a dance pole. This is their true story.*

INT. THE ACE OF SPADES CLUB - NEW YEAR'S EVE

Carpeted night club with round tables and chairs is in total darkness. One by one, stage lights turn on revealing a rectangular runway-stage perpendicular to its wall. Two overhead spotlights snap on illuminating a chrome dance pole mounted near the stage's end. Dance-rock music blares on.

NYE CROWD, mostly straight and gay MEN, in tuxedos. Some hard-partying FEMALES in evening dresses are at their own tables sprinkled throughout. All wear various *Happy New Year* hats.

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

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

COOL-AID (FILTERED)

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

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

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

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

Kraken ends by doing a double backflip off the top of the pole as music finishes. Standing Ovation from NYE Crowd.

New music plays as Kraken "politics" his way through NYE Crowd with dollar bills being stuck into his thong. He gets to club's entrance then turns smiling at his subjects with arms held high in victory as --the king of all he surveys.

He throws kisses to all, then grabs a brown paper lunch bag with something in it hidden by the front door and exits.

EXT. ACE OF SPADES CLUB - CONTINUOUS

The club's exterior has a brick front with anti-Gay graffiti sprayed onto it. "Happy New Year Show" banner hangs below its neon sign with "S" and "P" letters burnt out so club's sign now flashes "Ace of _ _ades."

CAPTION: *Ace of Spades card is the symbol of transformation, faith in others, forgiveness, and unconditional love.*

Kraken exits, still in thong, carrying his paper bag. He makes his way across the street holding hands up to stop traffic in both directions with Brooklyn-attitude, *Hey I'm walkin' here*, then enters a swanky hotel's main entrance.

INT. HOTEL ACROSS FROM ACE OF SPADES - CONTINUOUS

Large expensive lobby with red carpet and matching furniture.

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

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

HOTEL MANAGER
May I help you --sir?

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

KRAKEN
All your cash. Be cool, I always
am.

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

EXT. HOTEL ACROSS FROM ACE OF SPADES - CONTINUOUS

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

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

PATROL OFFICERS

H-H-HALT!

A stream of money is flowing behind Kraken as he runs. He reaches into his thong's pouch. Both Officers fire and their bullets hit him; first in a butt-cheek slowing him to a limp, then second in a hamstring dropping him. Kraken falls forward losing his paper bag which explodes onto the sidewalk and bills fly. Two Police Officers rush to cuff Kraken behind.

KRAKEN

In my money-maker, Damn?!

PEDESTRIANS look up at the sky as they step on bills, pocket some, and try to walk away looking innocent. None succeed.

EXT. ACES OF SPADES CLUB - MOMENTS LATER

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

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

KOOL-AID (FILTERED)

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

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

Police Cruisers arrive with red lights and sirens on.

FLASHBACK TO:

EXT. AUTO GARAGE - DAY - A YEAR AGO

A police cruiser with red light and siren on, speeds past a typical gas-station garage with one car raised on a lift inside its bay and two old-style gas pumps with glass globes.

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

CAPTION: *One year earlier*

LANCELOT DUPREZ, impeccably dressed and impeccably dirty-minded, is a cultured older gay man with a charismatic personality. He has short white hair, piercing blue eyes, and is wearing a baby-blue blazer with matching ascot.

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

LANCELOT

Fill her up --*gently please*.

Lancelot pats his car's trunk lovingly.

The sound of a dropped wrench clanging inside the bay's cement floor draws his attention. He sashays towards it.

INT. SAME AUTO GARAGE - MOMENTS LATER

JOSHUA "JOY-BOY" JONES, early 20s, in a filthy mechanic's jumpsuit, holds his hurt hand cursing.

JOSHUA

Shit, piss, bitch, god damn!

He bends to pick up his wrench with his backside to Lancelot who fans himself.

LANCELOT

Yoo-hooooo!

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

JOSHUA

Fuuuuuuuuuck!

Lancelot fans himself faster getting out a business card.

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

JOSHUA

What?!

LANCELOT

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

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

JOSHUA

Not that way.

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

LANCELOT

To each his own, but if you do --
drop by here tomorrow morning
around nine-ish. You might, just
might, be ever so glad you did.

Lancelot sashays back to his car.

Joshua looks at the card, then at Lancelot.

JOSHUA

Just who the hell are you?

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

LANCELOT

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

Lancelot walks by Attendant who is holding the gas-pump-
handle with his hand out.

Lancelot gets in his car and drives away blowing his horn
which also has a unique tune.

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

ATTENDANT

*Flame on, flame off, lightning-
bug.*

EXT. BECKY'S HOUSE ON CITY OUTSKIRTS - LATER THAT DAY

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

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

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

KENNY

Daddy!

Kenny jumps up and Joshua catches her in one arm. She hugs
him. He presents her bike.

JOSHUA

Looks like rain.

Joshua puts Kenny's bike just inside the door.

An angry REBECCA "BECKY" JONES, 20s, once a Prom Queen but now a frazzled hard-working single-mom, yanks the door all the way open with her hand out.

JOSHUA
Need more time.

BECKY
Why, bill collectors don't give me
"more time?"

JOSHUA
I'm trying.

BECKY
Try harder!

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

JOSHUA
I'm getting a second job.

BECKY
Doing what!

JOSHUA
Uhhh, waiting on tables.

BECKY
You --work at a restaurant?

JOSHUA
Bar, supposed to have good tips.

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

BECKY
One week, but then "we" have to
have it, got it?

Becky steps back inside and closes the door.

Joshua traces a finger around its window frame whispering.

JOSHUA
Luv ya'.

Joshua gets on his motorcycle and rides away.

Thunder rumbles in the distance.

EXT. ACE OF SPADES CLUB - NEXT MORNING

Building's brick exterior is washed bright with no graffiti. All neon letters work as its brand-new sign comes on.

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

INT. ACE OF SPADES - CONTINUOUS

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

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

ACE

Gentleman, this is not just about dancing, acrobatics, or gymnastics; this is all about --entertainment.

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

ACE

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

JOSHUA

Who, me? Oh, I'm actually --I, actually don't know why I'm here?

Lancelot speaks from a dark recessed corner.

LANCELOT

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

JOSHUA

Joshua Jones, mechanic.

ACE

We all use stage names here, mine is ACE. And since your enthusiasm is so overwhelming, yours will be, JOY-BOY.

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

ACE

What about you, Idaho?

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

ACE

Not the freshest egg in the carton?

(no response)

Yo, wicker-man!

Country points to his own chest.

Ace nods, then looks straight up shaking his head, *Why me?*

COUNTRY

(thick Southern accent)

On my own since a teen, always need cash --and you can call me anythin' long as it's not late fer supper.

ACE

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

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

SLEDGE

Construction worker, live in a trailer with five kids.

JOSHUA

What's your wife think of you working here?

SLEDGE

Wouldn't know, wouldn't care.

COUNTRY

You wife left you with five kids?!

SLEDGE

All four of them did.

ACE

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

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

ACE

I've seen you around town?

Detroit lowers his sunglasses to look ovetop them.

DETROIT

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

ACE

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

DETROIT

Dude, I already got one mother.

ACE

(snaps fingers, remembers)
You go by, Dee-T, right? But here, you'll motor on as, DETROIT.

(claps hands)

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

COUNTRY

How many fellers you hirin' anywho?

LANCELOT

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

COUNTRY

"Lofty" --as in hay loft?

LANCELOT

Aren't you just precious?!

JOSHUA

You the owner?

LANCELOT

I'm the General Manager, that's all you need know. Let's move on.

ACE

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

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

COUNTRY

How'd he --?

JOSHUA

I can't --?

DETROIT

Niiiiiiice.

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

ACE

Your time, is always, their money.

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

ACE

Time's, UP!

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

EXT. ACES OF SPADES - CONTINUOUS

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

SLEDGE

Felt like Boot.

COUNTRY

Felt like a boot --kicked me.

JOSHUA

Don't think I can do this, man.

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

DETROIT

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

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

SLEDGE

Got anything --stronger?

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

Joshua and Country cough-exhale their smoke in surprise.

Sledge tilts his head at Detroit while "shopping," *Hmmmm?*

INT. ACE OF SPADES - MOMENTS LATER

FOUR MORE NEW RAW RECRUITS now stand before Ace who points to TOM "TEXAS" TANNER, a huge ripped bodybuilder wearing a flannel shirt with its sleeves torn off at the shoulders.

TEXAS

Tom Tanner from Texas.

LANCELOT

Of course you are, dear. Your middle initial wouldn't happen to be "N" would it?

ACE

"Beefcake" would certainly apply, but since you're as big as your state, let's bulldog you, TEXAS.

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

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

ARETHA

Me, me, I'm next!

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

LANCELOT

Anytime this century, sweetheart.

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

ARETHA

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

Aretha snap-finger-waves, *So there*.

ACE

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

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

ACE

You're up, Lynryd Skynryd.

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

FREEBIRD

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

ACE

Alright, that's enough singing for one day, not-fat lady. Why don't you fly away as, FREEBIRD.

FREEBIRD

I'm up for that.

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

ACE

Semper Fi.

CANNON

You were in the Corps?

ACE

Nope, saw your tat.

Cannon announces to all as a D.I.

CANNON

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

TEXAS

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

All laugh except Cannon who glares at Texas.

ACE

What'd you do while "in?"

CANNON

Armor.

ACE

Then you shall roll on as, CANNON.

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

INT. ACE OF SPADES - MOMENTS LATER

The earlier Failing-Four now enter the club with clown-grins, just as Ace sticks his backwards summersault off the pole.

ACE

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

JOSHUA/COUNTRY/SLEDGE/DETROIT

Pole Position!

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

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

ARETHA

My mascara!

ACE

Okay, everyone follow me so I can show you our dressing room.

JOSHUA

Singular?

LANCELOT

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

Ace leads all EIGHT DANCERS into back as Lancelot follows.

INT. ACE OF SPADES DRESSING ROOM - MOMENTS LATER

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

ACE

Everyone get ready.

JOSHUA

For --?

LANCELOT

For your debut, darlink.

(points to cardboard box)

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

JOSHUA

When's the Opening?

Lancelot pats Joshua's cheek like a favorite aunt.

LANCELOT

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

(looks at pocket watch)

Ten Minutes!

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

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

Detroit smiles and opens his jacket wide.

DETROIT

Show Time.

INT. JOSHUA'S APARTMENT - EARLY NEXT MORNING

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

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

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

LINDEN

Late night, wallflower?

(no response)

Shift starts in a couple of hours you know.

Linden opens refrigerator to chug from an open juice bottle.

LINDEN

And your half of the rent --
(swallows, wipes chin)
is due today, roomie.

Joshua stands and empties all his pockets onto the floor.
Around him, dollar bills rain. Linden chokes on his juice.

LINDEN

Jesus --knock over a 7-11?

Joshua shuffles to his bedroom like a zombie.

JOSHUA

Feels like one --knocked me over.

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

Linden picks up the cloth and examines it. It's a thong. It
crunches. Linden pulls a dollar bill out of its pouch, then
drops both like electrocuted.

INT. JOSHUA'S GARAGE - LATER THAT WEEK

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

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

BECKY

Well?

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

BECKY

HEY!

Joshua jerks awake hitting his forehead on a rocker panel.

JOSHUA

What the #\$\$?!

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

BECKY

Roll a stripper?

Linden drops his wrench, then picks it up chuckling.

JOSHUA

Do you really care how I got it?

BECKY

(counts money)

Not now.

(turns to exit)

Kenny will be ready at six.

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

JOSHUA

Wait!

Becky turns angry. Joshua arrives winded.

JOSHUA

Have to work tonight.

BECKY

Just like you --to disappoint her.

JOSHUA

Yeah, well at least she won't have me arrested over it!

(breathes deep, relaxes)

Want your money on time or not?

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

BECKY

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

Becky drives away. Joshua yells after her.

JOSHUA

Don't make me the bad-guy!

(turns back to garage)

You always do.

INT. ACE OF SPADES DRESSING ROOM - THAT NIGHT

Like a cattle-pen without the mooing, the Eight Dancers mill around each other with sore muscles getting undressed, then put on their thongs.

Ace lathers himself good, then hands his bottle of baby oil around.

ACE

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

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

ACE

That's one way to go.

COUNTRY

Where'd you get the duds, dude?

ARETHA

(model-twirls)

Boutique where I work. You all
simply must visit it.

JOSHUA

Don't have time.

ARETHA

Then "it" simply must --

Aretha raises hands above his head to *clap twice* and TINY, 50s, 5' short, obese and balding, as creepy a white cracker as ever a whiz there was, enters. He wears a fully-buttoned wrinkled *Columbo* raincoat carrying multiple outfits on hangers and a plastic see-through box of costume-thongs.

ARETHA

visit you all.

Christmas came early this year as the Seven Dancers gather around Tiny shopping. Aretha smiles like a used car salesman.

ARETHA

And we do, have a payment plan.

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

DETROIT

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

Detroit opens his jacket to unzip its pharmacy-liner, a new shipment came in.

The Seven Dancers look from Detroit to Tiny and back to Detroit. Ahhh, decisions, decisions.

INT. ACE OF SPADES - LATER THAT NIGHT

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

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

Males politely *clap* fanning themselves.

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

BIKER FEMALE

Land on this, Bitch!

Joshua works through Crowd getting tips from Biker Females who place their hands *deep* into his thong's pouch. He giggles like a little girl, hey, it tickles. He goes to the Bar.

Bartender is always SATIN, a Drag Queen always in a platinum *Dolly Parton* wig. She's a dark false-tanned Caucasian and Lancelot's live-in lover. At 5'5", she's skinny, and a chain-smoker that gives "her" voice a *Harvey Fierstein* rasp.

JOSHUA

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

SATIN

Own-ers, plural.

JOSHUA

Okay. Who are ...?

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

SATIN

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

JOSHUA

O-kaaay? In that case, give me a whis ...

SATIN

Table number, baby.

JOSHUA

What? Uh, no, this is for me.

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

SATIN

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

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

SATIN

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

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

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

INT. ACE OF SPADES DRESSING ROOM - LATER THAT NIGHT

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

Lancelot, followed by Ace, enters and claps twice.

LANCELOT

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

JOSHUA

But I have a ...

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

LANCELOT

Business got off to a slow start,
but tomorrow, we have a wonderful
opportunity to "get off" a whole
new customer base.

COUNTRY

A what?

LANCELOT

What?

COUNTRY

I said it first.

LANCELOT

My dear boy --

Lancelot swats Country's thong bare-bottom playfully.

LANCELOT

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

ACE

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

COUNTRY

What they exposin'?

LANCELOT

Hopefully, their wallets.

ACE

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

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

LANCELOT

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

COUNTRY

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

Lancelot smiles mischievous, then points to a large cardboard box most theatrical.

LANCELOT

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

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

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

Country holds up his itty-bitty black shorts and tilts head like a dog. They will leave nothing, to anyone's imagination.

ACE

We all arrive in a group, wearing these outfits.

LANCELOT

And you --will give you out free admission tickets.

COUNTRY

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

LANCELOT

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

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

LANCELOT

Gentle "men," the best things in life are never truly freely free.
(no response, explains)
No woman will come into our club alone, but if you hand out only one ticket to a group of beautiful belles, they will sing themselves silly to have a Ladies Night here.

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

ACE

Be on time, be sober, be clean, but above all --be outstanding.

INT. OLD CONVENTION CENTER IN NASHVILLE - NEXT MORNING

Mostly glass and concrete building in the heart of Nashville.

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

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

COUNTRY

Lancelot a-comin'?

The blacked-out security front seat window lowers to reveal Lancelot is their driver. He "toodalo" waves.

LANCELOT

Laissez-faire --fairies!

COUNTRY

Who, the what?

JOSHUA

French for, "Let do."

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

TEXAS

"Let do" this!

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

INT. NASHVILLE CONVENTION CENTER - CONTINUOUS

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

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

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

Country's favorite TV-show is *Gomer Pyle*.

COUNTRY

"Goll-oll leeeeeee!"

TEXAS

Looks like an episode a' *Cops*.

JOSHUA

Lions and tigers and beavers ...

ARETHA

Oh My!

DETROIT

Who here needs a little courage?

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

FREEBIRD

(as *The Cowardly Lion*)

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

Detroit taps Cocaine on the back of each willing Dancer's hand. They all look at each other, then snort as one. It sounds like a wind-test tunnel.

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

DANCERS

ACES!

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

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

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

FREEBIRD

Who wants free passes to our show!

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

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

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

SECURITY GUARDS, overweight in too-tight uniforms, arrive to the commotion and question Aretha, "*Where's your pass?*"

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

Convention Ladies clap and yell encouragement to both groups.

EXT. CONVENTION CENTER - MOMENTS LATER

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

Security Guards exit same doors, but are now having mini heart-attacks while pointing after the limo and wheezing.

INT. DANCERS LIMO - MOMENTS LATER

A bottle of champagne now sits in its ice bucket.

The driver's privacy window comes down.

LANCELOT

A cheerful cheers to my cherubs!

Dancers laugh hysterical as Ace "pops" the bottle open.

CANNON

Incoming!

The cork barely misses Lancelot who closes his window miffed.

LANCELOT

Animals.

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

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

EXT. DANCERS LIMO - MOMENTS LATER

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

As you might expect, several *Failure to Pay Full Time and Attention* accidents occur.

INT. ACE OF SPADES - THAT NIGHT

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

Texas is the first performer with his skin baby-oil glossy.

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

CONVENTION LADIES

Take it off! Take it off! Take it,
ALLLLLL Off!

EXT. ACE OF SPADES - MOMENTS LATER

The Dancers "Convention" antics and accidents has spread.

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

CAMERAMAN

Ready?

She clears her throat and throws head to tussle hair, then Cameraman gives a silent 3, 2, 1, Go, finger-countdown.

REPORTER

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

(points up to its sign)

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

Screams from Convention Ladies inside the club echo out.

REPORTER

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

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

REPORTER

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

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

REPORTER

(clears throat again)
and getting an eye full, of Nashville's newest and very entertaining --entertainment.

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

REPORTER

Do I have time to go inside?

Her's --is not a question.

INT. BEAU'S HOUSE - SIMULTANEOUS

Living room of another small rambler modestly decorated.

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

BEAU

Yes, I saw it.
(listens, responds)
Yes, I agree.
(listens, responds)
Yes, I'll come in early.
(hangs up)
What a dick.

EXT. NASHVILLE CITY COUNCIL CHAMBER - NEXT DAY

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

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

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

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

HAUSER

I agree! But what?!

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

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

BEAU

Whaaaaat?

INT. ACE OF SPADES - THAT NIGHT

Their club is now Nashville's "hottest spot."

It's packed again now with a SECOND FULL CROWD, looking same, but made up of other Nashville frustrated house-maidens. *There are so many.*

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

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

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

INT. ACE OF SPADES DRESSING ROOM - MOMENTS LATER

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

DETROIT

Man, that shit'll kill ya.

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

DETROIT

Whereas this shit --will make you kill.

JOSHUA

(to Texas)

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

Texas kisses both his biceps laughing.

TEXAS

Fuck off --brother.

Lancelot sticks his head in the doorframe.

LANCELOT

The Bridal Party at Table 7 -- whoever gets them in a Private Room, gets fifty bucks bonus cash.

TEXAS

Guess who that's gonna' be, girls?

Complaint-murmuring throughout Dancers as Texas strut-exits.

JOSHUA

Man, I wish he'd go on a trip.

Cannon elbow-nudges Joshua.

CANNON

Oh, he's going on a trip alright.

Cannon opens a hand, it has three bolts in it.

CANNON

Wait for his "signature" dismount.

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

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

INT. ACE OF SPADES ROOM - MOMENTS LATER

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

Canon and Detroit smile and fist-bump.

CANNON

Have a nice trip --

DETROIT

see you next Fall.

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

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

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

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

TEXAS

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

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

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

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

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

COUNTRY

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

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

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

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

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

SECOND CROWD

Awwwwwww --

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

Second Crowd leans forward as one in their seats.

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

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

All raise their arms and sway their hands singing in sync.

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

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

SECOND CROWD

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

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

INT. JOSHUA'S APARTMENT - EARLY NEXT MORNING

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

LINDEN

Burning the candle beyond both ends, 'ey chandler.

(opens freezer)

I don't know how you do it?

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

JOSHUA

(puts arm over eyes)

Drugs help. --Besides, I like all the fringe, fringe benefits.

Joshua then smiles big with euphoric memories.

LINDEN

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

(drinks more juice)

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

Joshua shuffles off to bed.

JOSHUA

You do it, bud. I'm beat.

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

LINDEN

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

INT. AUNTIE'S STRIP CLUB - DAYS LATER

Typical strip club; dark, dank, disgusting. Black floor tiles, recessed ceiling lights, and lucite elevated dance floor lit from underneath with two poles and bar stools.

Tables with chairs are around its raised dance-floor with a "Dancer's Only" dressing room door in the back.

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

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

JOSHUA

Play Diamond for me.

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

MERCEDES

DIAMOND, get your black ass out here! Some white boy wants some!

JOSHUA

You new here?

MERCEDES

Bite me.

JOSHUA

Wouldn't mind.

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

MERCEDES

I sure would.

DIAMOND, African-American, mid-40's but still a MILF, enters from the back wearing a crop-top with boob-bottoms exposed. Her perfect, but enhanced breasts, never bounce.

DIAMOND

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

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

DIAMOND

Joshua?

Diamond hugs him a little too friendly, then introduces him.

DIAMOND

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

JOSHUA

(rubs sore neck)
Ice would be nice.

Diamond waves both hands, *Stopp*. Her painted fingernails are curled two-inches long. She turns to Mercedes.

DIAMOND

Suds for my man.

JOSHUA

No really, just ice, with seltzer.

MERCEDES

Ridin' the wagon, buckaroo?

JOSHUA

Just watering the horses, ma'am.

Diamond squeeze-tugs one of Joshua's cheeks.

DIAMOND

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

JOSHUA

Sure he'd love that, me bangin' his
mom --and my bedboard.

DIAMOND

He's heard worse. How is he?

JOSHUA

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

Diamond hand-motions to a table where both sit.

DIAMOND

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

JOSHUA

Talk with our manager, Lancelot.
You already sound like him. --Sure
you want what we bring?

Diamond's laugh is explosive.

DIAMOND

Can't be worse than what we gots!

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

JOSHUA

(head-motions to Mercedes)
Who's the Karate Kid?

DIAMOND

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

JOSHUA

"Like" --or trust?

DIAMOND

What's the difference?

JOSHUA

Maybe she ain't found --
(rubs his sore neck)
the right one?

DIAMOND

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

JOSHUA

(winces)
Yes --mom.

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

DIAMOND

Let's make some money, honey!

INT. ACE OF SPADES DRESSING ROOM - THAT NIGHT

Seven Dancers, minus Aretha, are oiling themselves.

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

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

Aretha enters wearing what looks like a boys cowboy outfit; small cowboy hat, mini-leather vest, matching leather thong, toy double-pistoled leather holster, and cowboy boots.

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

COUNTRY

You supposed to be *Rusty* from that there T.V. show?

TEXAS

You look more like *Rin Tin Tin*.

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

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

JOSHUA

Where'd you get that?

ARETHA

I keep telling you to stop by my boutique, but since Muhammad still won't come to my mountain --

Aretha puckers her lips at Texas, *smack*.

ARETHA

I brought Tiny again --and we have bunches and bunches of pretty new costumes out in the trunk of his pink Cadillac.

Other Dancers go wide-eyed interested, even Texas.

ARETHA

So what do you say, girls --shall we go shopping?

Aretha snaps her fingers in time and begins singing Bruce Springsteen's *Pink Cadillac*.

ARETHA

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

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

EIGHT DANCERS

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

The fire door slams shut behind them as Lancelot enters.

LANCELOT

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

Lancelot wipes his forehead with his ascot's ends.

INT. ACE OF SPADES - LATER THAT NIGHT

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

Lancelot steps onto the stage as M.C.

LANCELOT

Sorry for the slight delay ladies
and gentle men --
(looks to Satin)
and even those, who aren't so
gentle.

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

LANCELOT

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

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

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

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

THIRD CROWD
Uuuuuu --.

Cool-Aid now plays the extended version of Springsteen's *Pink Cadillac*.

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

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

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

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

EXT. HAUSER'S OFFICE BUILDING - NEXT MORNING

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

INT. HAUSER'S OFFICE - MOMENTS LATER

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

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

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

BEAU
Thank you, sir. Am I dismissed?

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

HAUSER
Son a' bees-wax!

BEAU
Excuse me?

HAUSER
S, O, B!

BEAU
Excuse, me?!

Hauser nods smiling at the pictures and blows smoke rings.

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

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

HAUSER
We'll license 'em outta business!

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

BEAU
How, sir?

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

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

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

BEAU
So all dancers will have to buy an
S.O.B. license --is that it, sir?

HAUSER

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

BEAU

Sir, how can they do that, sir?

HAUSER

Pin it on their donkey for all I
care, just as long as it's on 'em.

Hauser waves Beau off *snapping* his fingers repeatedly.

HAUSER

Starting tonight.

Beau is almost out the door, freezes, then asks with his back to Hauser.

BEAU

I take it, you want me to go back
in there tonight --sir?

HAUSER

Do one-legged ducks swim in a
circle?

Beau turns back more than just uncomfortable.

BEAU

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

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

HAUSER

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

Hauser waves Beau's pictures like a trophy.

HAUSER

Couple a' more a' these, and I can
shut Gomorrah down, right up to
their G.D. Sodom-ized asses.

Hauser back-hand waves for Beau to leave, *Shoo*. Beau exits.
Hauser sits on his throne and turns to gaze out at his
kingdom puffing smoke-rings. He punches one apart.

HAUSER

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

INT. OUTSIDE HAUSER'S OFFICE - SIMULTANEOUS

Beau stands outside leaning back against Hauser's door.

BEAU

When you take your dog for a walk,
do you both use the same tree?
(as *Jeff Foxworthy*)
'Caussssse, you just might be a
Redneck.

Beau goes to his desk shaking his head.

INT. ACE OF SPADES DRESSING ROOM - THAT NIGHT

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

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

COUNTRY

You startin' ta wilt?

FREEBIRD

Flame gel.

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

DANCERS

"Flame?"

CANNON

Does Lancelot know about your --
Fougasse?

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

FREEBIRD
Will in a moment.

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

INT. ACE OF SPADES - MOMENTS LATER

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

SATIN
Gonna' need to buy Performer
Insurance now, honey.

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

FOURTH CROWD
Uuuuuu-ahhhh?!

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

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

Other Dancers rush to exit into the back as Aretha steps on the stage.

Freebird storms out tip-less, following the Other Dancers (*all true*).

INT. ACE OF SPADES DRESSING ROOM - CONTINUOUS

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

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

Freebird enters cursing and kicking things. One of the items he kicks is Cannon's gym bag.

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

CANNON

Calm, down.

Cannon releases Freebird who coughs recovering still angry.

FREEBIRD

Did you see that, I mean, Did You See That! I set myself on freakin' fire, and nothing --nuth-ing!

DETROIT

Well, you know what Walt Disney said.

Detroit puts Doctor's Satchel in a locker, then locks it.

DETROIT

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

FREEBIRD

What the "f" are you talking about?

DETROIT

I'm just sayin' ...

ACE

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

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

INT. ACE OF SPADES - CONTINUOUS

Dancers enter running, then freeze in astonishment.

Pandemonium with the Fourth Crowd running for the exits as Nashville RIOT POLICE, in full gear, raid their club.

Aretha is held by the TWO BIGGEST COPS, as she whimpers high-pitched.

ARETHA

Can't we all, just get along?

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

Two More Cops draw their guns.

SATIN

All you have to do, sugar babies --
is ask nicely.

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

SATIN

Watch the hair.

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

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

HAUSER

Good job, boy --sensational.

Hauser exits the club blowing "victory" smoke rings.

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

INT. NASHVILLE NIGHT COURT - NOW MIDNIGHT

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

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

MALE BAILIFF

All rise!

Everyone stands as a MALE JUDGE, Caucasian, 50s, in judicial robe, enters, then freezes gazing out at his gallery of *Folies Bergère* on Crack.

MALE JUDGE

What the --?

Male Judge falls into his chair.

MALE BAILIFF

Be seated.

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

MALE JUDGE

What in the blue-blue blazes have you brought me, Counselor?

PROSCECUTOR

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

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

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

PROSCECUTOR

Failure to conform with a new city ordinance, sir.

MALE JUDGE

Which is?

Hauser stands up in the far back.

HAUSER

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

MALE JUDGE

How --newly formed?

Hauser answers coughing, so impossible to understand.

MALE JUDGE

Say when?

HAUSER

This afternoon, your Honor.

Male Judge navigates his ocean of human flotsam searching.

MALE JUDGE

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

Lancelot slowly raises a hand. Satin adjusts her wig.

MALE JUDGE

When were you notified of this
"new" requirement?

LANCELOT

Just now, your Honor.

Male Judge stares dead-pan at Hauser, then glares at
Prosecutor while talking to Lancelot.

MALE JUDGE

Is it your intention to comply with
said new ordinance.

SATIN

First thing in the morning, your
highness.

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

MALE JUDGE

Case dismissed --

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

MALE JUDGE

pending full compliance.

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

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

HAUSER

You can forget about my endorsement
next election, *boy*.

Beau sits in the back and lowers his head --smiling.

INT. AUNTIE'S STRIP CLUB - NEXT NIGHT

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

OLD STRIPPER dances on the stage to jukebox music.

Mercedes works behind the bar.

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

DIAMOND

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

JOSHUA

One of our own works in a boutique.

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

DIAMOND

Uh-huh, that --boo-tee-kee?

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

Joshua nods. Diamond shivers.

DIAMOND

Some of the girls shop there, but
he isn't interested in any --
"special" discount.

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

DIAMOND

You're up, baby. You hangin'?

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

DIAMOND

I expected --bigger.

Mercedes gives an explosive, *Ha*, from behind the bar.

JOSHUA

(turns to Mercedes)
Just like love --it grows.

Mercedes gives out an even louder, *HA*.

Joshua goes onto the stage.

SOLO POLE DANCE SEQUENCE: Joshua feels challenged and starts slow, then builds into a frenetic, but sexy dance-set.

Female Audience goes wild. Truck Drivers drown their disappointment while looking away.

Diamond looks ovetop her purple-framed glasses at Mercedes.

DIAMOND

Boy's got some moves.

MERCEDES

Like a beast.

DIAMOND

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

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

Joshua is surprised.

Truck Drivers are pleasantly surprised.

Juke Box record changes.

POLE DANCE SEQUENCES: Mercedes strips out of jeans, t-shirt, and bra with elegance to reveal a sequined-thong. She does a beautiful contemporary-style dance-set to dismount back-flipping onto one knee and sweeps a hand from Joshua to the pole "*Your turn*" as the record changes. Joshua bows, *Mi-lady*, then snaps fingers in-time to music to do a Jazz-routine that rivals any *Bob Fosse* on Broadway. His dismount also lands him on one knee beside Mercedes.

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

Both Audiences go wild clapping.

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

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

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

MERCEDES

Men!

DIAMOND

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

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

JOSHUA

What's that?

TINY

"Special" --discount.

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

JOSHUA

Uh --thanks?

Joshua goes to Mercedes and Diamond.

JOSHUA

You're a trained dancer. --Where?

DIAMOND

Two months at Juilliard.

JOSHUA

New York City! What happened?

MERCEDES

Men.

New record plays. NEW STRIPPER steps onto stage.

Joshua has to yell over the music at Mercedes.

JOSHUA

Having a viewing party at my apartment tomorrow night!

MERCEDES

Why do I care?!

JOSHUA

One of our guys got a spot on "Star Search!"

MERCEDES

Why --do I care?!

JOSHUA

Somebody saw him sing at Ace!

DIAMOND

Your apartment's too small, have everyone come to our house!

JOSHUA

Can't, have my daughter this weekend!

DIAMOND

Bring her along, she can nap in my
bedroom!

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

JOSHUA

Sounds like fun, seven o'clock!

Joshua turns to watch the New Stripper.

Mercedes glares at Diamond who shrugs, *What?*

EXT. DIAMOND'S HOUSE - NEXT NIGHT

Two-story with pink curtains and a flowerbed in a lower-class neighborhood. Multiple cars are parked in front of it.

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

KENNY

You're not going to abandon me are
you?

Joshua picks her up in his arms.

JOSHUA

Never, ever.

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

INT. DIAMOND'S HOUSE - MOMENTS LATER

Inexpensive, but clean, living room furniture. No one is in it as music can be heard from its basement.

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

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

KENNY

I'm, Kenny.

MERCEDES

I'm, Mercedes.

KENNY

Like the car?

Mercedes releases and turns sideways to show her tattoo.

KENNY

The best --or nothing?

MERCEDES

Usually --"nothing."

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

MERCEDES

Didn't think you were coming.

KENNY

We can't miss Sledge singing!

JOSHUA

What'd you tell Mom?

KENNY

Sleep-over.

Joshua smiles at Mercedes who shakes her head disinterested, then exits downstairs. Joshua takes Kenny's hand to follow.

INT. BEAU'S LIVING ROOM - LATER THAT NIGHT

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

MODERATOR (FILTERED)

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

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

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

MODERATOR

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

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

Beau stops cleaning-up, hypnotized by his Indian cobra.

TV INSERT: Cannon sings the song's chorus.

CANNON (HYPNOTIZED)

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

STUDIO FEMALES

Eeeeeeeeee --!

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

INT. DIAMOND'S HOUSE - NEXT MORNING

Polite knock on door. No response. Firmer knock on door. No response. Door knob turns, then opens slow.

Becky enters apprehensive wearing jeans and a hoodie.

BECKY

Hello?
(no response)
Helloo-ooo?

Becky looks out to check the house number on door frame with the note in her hand, then enters. She closes door to stand perplexed with hands on hips. Music is barely heard coming from downstairs. She pockets her note and goes downstairs.

INT. DIAMOND'S BASEMENT - MOMENTS LATER

Marijuana and Cocaine are on a glass table. Strewn around it are bodies in various form of disrobe. The Ace Dancers, plus Auntie's Strippers, lie like corpses, in matched-pairs, except Diamond has Texas and Country each asleep on her "after-market" breasts. Mercedes sleeps on Joshua's breathing chest. *Caligula* had nothing on this scene.

Becky is furious as she smashes something on the floor.

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

DIAMOND

What the --?

Becky kicks the bottom Joshua's foot, hard.

JOSHUA

Ow! Who the --?!

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

JOSHUA

Beck --? Ow!

BECKY

How could YOU --!

(stomps a foot)

Bring my daughter into this din of inequity!

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

DIAMOND

Den a' who?

TEXAS

(smacks lips waking)

Who's the bible-thumper?

COUNTRY

(snuggling)

Yeah, tell her, to stop thumpin'.

JOSHUA

(buying for time)

Uhhhh --Hey everyone, this is my wife, Becky.

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

BECKY

EX-Wife! --Where's my daughter?!

JOSHUA

"Our" daughter.

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

ACE Dancers instinctively cover their own in their sleep.

BECKY

If you ever want to have more --!

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

Mercedes jumps up in front to protect him.

MERCEDES

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

Becky points at Mercedes' shoulder-tattoo.

BECKY

Nice stamp, tramp!

Becky grabs Mercedes throat in a Ranger Chokehold.

BECKY

Where's my ...!

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

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

BECKY

Bitch!

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

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

DIAMOND

Not in my house, bitch-ettes!
(to Becky)
Upstairs in my bedroom, asleep.

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

Mercedes swishes her knife closed looking at Diamond.

MERCEDES

Told ya.

INT. DIAMOND'S SECOND FLOOR - MOMENTS LATER

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

BECKY

Kenny?

KENNY (O.S.)
(stops sobbing)
Mommy?

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

BECKY
Why did you lock the door, honey?

KENNY
I was afraid.

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

INT. JOSHUA'S GARAGE - NEXT WEEK

Joshua works under a car on his creeper again.

Linden works under a car up on a lift.

LINDEN
Told ya.

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

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

PROCESS SERVER
Joshua "Joy-Boy" Jones --?

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

PROCESS SERVER
father of Kendra Jones?

JOSHUA
Kenny.

Process Server floats a subpoena down to Joshua who juggles to catch it.

PROCESS SERVER
You've been served --royally.

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

Joshua opens his subpoena and reads, then crumples up angry.

LINDEN

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

(goes back to work)

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

JOSHUA

Oh yeah, any of them work for "special" discount?

Linden glares at Joshua, *Hey*, then tilts his head thinking.

INT. NASHVILLE FAMILY COURT - FOLLOWING WEEK

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

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

Joshua with his LAWYER, older, unshaven, wearing a cheap suit, enter and sit.

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

BECKY

You're paying for him.

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

FEMALE BAILIFF

All Rise!

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

FEMALE BAILIFF

Hear ye, hear ye, we are gathered here today in the case of Rebecca Jones versus Joyboy ...

LAWYER

Joshua!

Joshua glares at Becky who smiles mischievous.

FEMALE BAILIFF

versus Joshua Jones for sole custody of Kendra Jones. Be seated.

All sit, except Attorney.

ATTORNEY

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

Attorney sits. Lawyer stands.

LAWYER

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

Lawyer sits. Attorney stands.

ATTORNEY

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

Attorney sits. Lawyer goes to stand, but Female Judge holds up a hand, *Stop*, he does not stand.

FEMALE JUDGE

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

ATTORNEY

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

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

LAWYER

Uuuu-weee, yer Hona'! Can I gets that in Brail?!

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

LAWYER

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

FEMALE JUDGE

(looks up with punch line)
Scares the crap out of their dog?

Lawyer smiles hooking both thumbs under his suspenders.

LAWYER

Exactly, ya Hona'.

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

ATTORNEY

We intends ta' proooove ...!

FEMALE JUDGE

Enough!

Female Judge indicates, *Sit*, both Counselors do.

FEMALE JUDGE

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

Female Judge smacks her gavel and stands.

FEMALE BAILIFF

All Rise!

ALL stand.

Female Judge exits side door. Female Bailiff follows.

Becky and her Attorney exit main door.

Joshua sits down stunned. Lawyer sits beside him and pats his knee telling a simile joke.

LAWYER

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

Joshua has to chuckle shaking his head.

INT. AUNTIE'S STRIP CLUB - THAT NIGHT

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

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

Diamond steps on stage wearing a trailing chiffon nightgown.

DIAMOND

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

BEAU

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

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

CANNON

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

BEAU

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

(wags a finger)

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

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

CANNON/BEAU

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

Cannon twirls Beau twice and finishes bowing. Music ends.

Old Stripper takes stage to almost no applause. Music plays.

BEAU

I want you!

CANNON

Say again?

BEAU

(embarrassed)

Your picture, uh --

(pulls out camera)

I want to take your picture.

CANNON

Oh, uh, sure, come backstage later.

Cannon clucks his tongue and snap-finger points at Beau, then swaggers into the back.

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

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

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

Cannon is standing. Twenties-Something is on her knees with her back to the door with her head bobbing as only a young *thang* can.

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

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

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

INT. BEAU'S BATHROOM STALL - MOMENTS LATER

Beau enters bathroom door which squeaks, then enters a stall to lock its door. He stands motionless, then begins slapping his face hard.

Bathroom door squeaks horrible again. Beau freezes, then stands on toilet bowl and hunches over.

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

UNKNOWN MAN (O.S.)

Let me check.

Unknown Man tries the stall's doors, they all open. He gets to Beau's door and pushes, it's locked. Beau is petrified.

UNKNOWN MAN (O.S.)

Stoppppp --.

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

UNKNOWN MAN (O.S.)

What? Here? Silly boy, tricks are for kids.

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

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

HAUSER (O.S.)

Good job, boy --sensational.

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

HAUSER (O.S.)

Spank me while you do that.

Beau loses brain-cells, almost swoons, then the Devil appears on one shoulder and he examines his camera.

He adjusts its *Flash Selector* knob, then sets its *Film Advance* selector to automatic. He quietly unlocks his door, then raises camera lens up to sound of Hauser's chubby-cheeks being slapped.

STALL WALL INSERT: Beau's camera lens peeks up over its divider, then sound of his lens clicking as motor advances film furiously.

HAUSER (O.S.)
What the --!

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

HAUSER (O.S.)
Don't know, some pervert, but my assistant will track 'im down.
(silence, then)
Don't stop now, son!
(slobbering noise)
Good --boy.

INT. HAUSER'S OFFICE - NEXT DAY

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

HAUSER
Hold all calls, no interruptions.

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

HAUSER
Got a "delicate matter," I needs your help on, son.

BEAU
Don't call me "son."

HAUSER
Excuse me?

BEAU
No, don't think I will.

HAUSER
Excuse, you?

BEAU
Yes, believe I will. Do you like Patrick Swayze?

HAUSER

Do I, what! Who?!

BEAU

(quotes Swayze)

"Imagine me as a kid, growing up in redneck Texas with ballet shoes, tucking the violin under my arm. I had to fight my way up."

(dry spits to side)

Just to wind up, here --with you.

HAUSER

Taken leave a' your senses, boy?

BEAU

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

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

HAUSER

What's that?

BEAU

You're worst insensibility.

Hauser "feels" the size and contents of envelope, it has pictures.

HAUSER

You?!

BEAU

"You" do remember I'm an amateur photographer, don't you?

(no response)

You will, because now, I want to go professional.

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

HAUSER

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

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

Hauser slides over his cigar-guillotine.

BEAU

Real men --

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

BEAU
bite it off.

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

HAUSER
Terms?

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

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

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

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

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

BEAU
Time to ignite the filler.

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

HAUSER
I knows all that?

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

HAUSER
What do you want --really?

BEAU
What all boys want from their
oppressive fathers --freedom.

Beau slides over an official-looking memo.

Hauser reads it, then reacts, *WTF!*

HAUSER

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

Beau pulls out an identical envelope to his earlier one.

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

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

HAUSER

Guarantee?

BEAU

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

Beau blows three smoke rings that interlock.

BEAU

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

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

INT. LANCELOT'S OFFICE - LATER THAT DAY

Throne room of a wanna-be king with cheap Spanish furniture.

Lancelot sits behind his opulent desk looking at the ceiling.

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

BEAU

Do you have a moment for a great
business proposition?

(no response)

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

(no response)

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

(no response)

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

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

Lancelot slams a fist on his desk.

LANCELOT

YES!

BEAU

(incandescently luminous)
Thank you for giving me a chance,
sir, you won't regret it!

Beau exits primed by the new proud papa he never had.

Lancelot groans, then pushes chair away from his desk.

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

Lancelot hands him a stack of banded-money.

Cannon fans the money's edge near an ear counting, then *clucks* his tongue finger-snap pointing, and exits.

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

LANCELOT

Calendar?! --What, calendar?

INT. NASHVILLE COURTHOUSE COUNCIL CHAMBER - WEEKS LATER

Chaotic chaos as Council Members argue among themselves.

Hauser sits silent and blotchy-faced behind his Dias.

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

COUNCILMAN

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

Councilman opens his calendar like a centerfold magazine.

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

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

HAUSER

First Amendment, gentlemen.

COUNCILMAN

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

HAUSER

Don't call me, son.

COUNCILMAN

'Scuse me?

HAUSER

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

All Council Members stare as lost Lemmings.

HAUSER

Long as he don't get caught!

Guffawing and belly-laughing flow like a terrible tsunami.

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

The Men of Aces are at their peak of social demand. They wear their MOA satin jackets proudly everywhere and are stopped on the street for autographs. They dance at other clubs, hotel ballrooms, parties, and of course Aunties. They are the topic of gossip, magazine articles, and local television news. Nashville's newcomers reign supreme.

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

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

Dancers are getting ready. All look thinner than they used to with bags under their eyes from partying too much.

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

TEXAS

You got it?

DETROIT

I got it if I get it.

TEXAS

You'll get it, after closing.

DETROIT

Promise?

(no response)

with a cherry on top?

Texas glares at him. Detroit tosses him a vial of liquid steroid, then winks.

COUNTRY

Gonna' have to start calling you,
Doctor Detroit.

Detroit becomes a used car salesman.

DETROIT

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

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

SLEDGE

So how's it going?

JOSHUA

(with head down)

I think --

(looks up sad)

I'm gonna' lose my daughter.

SLEDGE

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

JOSHUA

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

SLEDGE

Who said I'm divorced?

The Other Dancers do double-takes, then listen in.

JOSHUA

But you said you had four wives?

SLEDGE

No, I said, I have five kids,
"they" --have four moms.

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

TEXAS

That's pretty f'n irresponsible.

SLEDGE

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

TEXAS

See any other dead-beats in here?

SLEDGE

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

Sledge stands with fists. Texas stands and flexes.

SLEDGE

Who the fuck you taking care of
besides your own muscle mass?

Joshua stands between them.

JOSHUA

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

TEXAS

Yeah, well just try it!

JOSHUA

What, no, I meant ...

Joshua puts his hands up too fast. Texas thinks he's throwing
a punch and throws his own first. His fist connects with
Joshua's eye spinning him to the floor.

Sledge throws a left-hook hitting Texas in the jaw, no
reaction. Sledge looks at his left fist, *WTF?* Texas smiles
and swings a haymaker. Sledge ducks and tackles him. They
wrestle on the floor.

Aretha high-pitched screams jumping on his chair cowering.

ACE
Knock It Off!

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

ACE
I was afraid of this.

SLEDGE
I ain't afraid a nobody!

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

Ace speaks to all as a father-figure.

ACE
And the rest of you fuck ups are always too fucked up to see that you're fucking up yourselves! You need to slow down and enjoy life! A plant-based diet is what, is --?
(looks confused)
uhhhhh --?

SLEDGE
You okay, Ace?

Ace faints forward. Sledge dives to catch him.

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

ARETHA
Eeeeeee!

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

Aretha faints. Detroit catches him, then drops him.

Tiny enters carrying an armful of new costumes.

TINY
Wait till you see what ...

Joshua turns to Tiny who faints falling onto his costumes.

JOSHUA

What?

Joshua looks in the wall mirror and now he screams.

JOSHUA

Oh, My, Godddd!

Lancelot enters.

LANCELOT

Goodness gracious, girls, sounds
like a slut convention in here.

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

Satin walks in with her "basebally" bat to see Armageddon.

SATIN

Well, shit.

Satin becomes the Drill Instructor Cannon always wanted.

SATIN

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

Her raw recruits just stand there.

SATIN

Move It, Move It!

Her soldiers expedite. She raises her bat over Texas.

SATIN

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

Joshua looks at Satin, she steps back with a hand on chest.

SATIN

Lord have mercy, you can't go out
looking like that!

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

SATIN

Darlin', now is not the time ...

JOSHUA

Just do it.

INT. ACE OF SPADES - MOMENTS LATER

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

TWO EMTs, in uniforms, pull an empty stretcher past the stage
into the back.

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

SATIN

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

(primps wig)

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

(clears throat nervous)

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

Two EMTs, pull unconscious Ace, strapped onto stretcher with
an oxygen mask, followed by Sledge, past Satin to exit club.

SATIN

MASKED DANCER!

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

Becky nudges Social Worker.

BECKY

See, see, told you, doesn't this
prove it?

Social Worker adjusts her glasses getting out a legal pad.

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

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

JOY-BOY SOLO: Joshua brings true joy to all who watch that night with glowing grace, effortless flow, and charismatic sext movement that rivals *Mikhail Baryshnikov's* best ballet.

On music's end, Joshua slithers up around the pole like a snake, coils, then releases to do the club's first triple backwards somersault to stick his standing-landing perfect.

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

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

Like a Starter's Pistol just went off, Fifth Crowd jumps to a standing ovation.

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

SOCIAL WORKER

You never said he was an artist.

She jumps up joining in the salutations speaking in French.

SOCIAL WORKER

Encore, Encore, Je vous en prie!

Becky looks at Attorney who shrugs his head nodding. They two stand and add their claps to the escalating din.

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

INT. FAMILY COURT - DAYS LATER

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

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

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

Female Bailiff enters from side-door.

FEMALE BAILIFF

All rise.

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

FEMALE BAILIFF

Be ...

FEMALE JUDGE

Stop!

Female Bailiff looks back at her, *What?*

FEMALE JUDGE

I read the Social Worker's report
recommending further study, so why
this Emergency Hearing?

Joshua looks panic-stricken at Lawyer.

ATTORNEY

Your Honor, my client needs more...

BECKY

Stop!

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

BECKY

Forgetaboutit.

JOSHUA

Excuse me?

Female Judge raises her gavel, then uses her sixth sense
after six years on the bench to let human nature take over.

BECKY

Yes, as a matter of fact, I do.
(turns to Joshua)
Based on how brilliantly you dance,
especially blindfolded.

Social Worker beams sitting up straighter.

JOSHUA

You were there?

ATTORNEY

We all were.

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

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

BECKY

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

Female Judge, Female Bailiff, and Social Worker hold the same *Awwww* look.

BECKY

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

FEMALE JUDGE

Damn doable. Case dismissed!

Female Judge strikes her gavel hard.

FEMALE JUDGE

Now get the hell out of my courtroom.

Social Worker fast-claps like a rock-groupie.

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

JOSHUA

Thank you.

BECKY

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

(thumbs at Attorney)

You're still paying for him.

Joshua pecks Becky on the cheek. Social Worker takes note.

INT. DIAMOND'S DINING ROOM - NOW THANKSGIVING DAY

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

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

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

DIAMOND

Everyone, please bow your heads.

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

DIAMOND

Dear, Lord --thanks.

Diamond begins carving her turkey. The Others are surprised.

DIAMOND

Oh, He don't care how long you say
it, just as long as you mean it
when you say it.

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

INT. ACE OF SPADES DRESSING ROOM - NOW CHRISTMAS EVE

Dressing room is decorated with Christmas Lights and cards.

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

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

SLEDGE

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

DETROIT

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

FREEBIRD

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

ARETHA

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

JOSHUA

Now that alimony comes in regular,
Ex backed off rhetorical rhetoric
and let's me see Kenny whenever I
want. So yeah, had a pretty darn
good time, thanks for asking.

COUNTRY

Hey, somebody said something about
seeing Ace talking to Lancelot?

Ace enters with his gym bag looking fit and healthy.

ACE

Merry Christmas, heathen!

All Dancers rush to congratulate Ace and welcome him back.

JOSHUA

So your doctors cleared you?

COUNTRY

How they do that, after a heart
attackee?

ACE

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

ARETHA

"Slight!" Honey, that's an abnormal
heart-rhythm. I know --
(fans self)
having some right now.

ACE

Yes it's electrical, but no, not
life threatening, just bothersome.
I have to self-monitor. So --
(claps hands)
ready to slay our belles?

OTHER DANCERS

(unenthusiastic responses)
Yeah ...Sure ...Why not, etc.

ACE

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

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

JOSHUA

Yeah --
(jumps to standing)
Fuck, Yeah!

SLEDGE

God Damn right it's Christmas!
(hits fist into palm)
Ace is back, and I'm in!

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

FREEBIRD

Fuck Currier and Ives bullshit!
(out "chains" costume)
Freebird's in the house, yeah baby!

DETROIT

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

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

ACE

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

Dancers act hurt, except Detroit whose eyes become slits.

ACE

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

Ace rips wall-mirror off to hold out to them.

ACE

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

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

DETROIT

I look guuuud.

ACE

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

DETROIT

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

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

ACE

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

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

DETROIT

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

Detroit packs up his drugs and personal items.

JOSHUA

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

DETROIT

Man, get your white head, outta' my
black ass and look around at the
real world I lives in. This --
(shakes Doctor's bag)
is as real as I let it get.

ACE

Life's all about choices, man.

DETROIT

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

Detroit goes to exit, but bumps into Lancelot entering.

LANCELOT

Excuse me, oh great timing, you're
up!

DETROIT

Up yours, pale-face, I quit!

Detroit storms out. Lancelot is quite beside himself.

LANCELOT

What that was rude.
(shocked epiphany)
Is he serious?

ACE

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

SLEDGE

But alcohol, that's okay, right?

ACE

In moderate moderation.

Lancelot wipes his brow with ascot.

LANCELOT

Guess I'll have to hire another
Negro.

Aretha loses all pretense of femininity as her voice drops.

ARETHA

Black Man, say it Cracker!

LANCELOT

Blackman?

ACE

Hands!

Dancers put one hand on top of his, then all look at
Lancelot, who puts his in. Their hands go up and down twice,
then break going up.

ALL

ACES!

Ace hangs Santa beard on Lancelot then puts Santa hat on him.

ACE

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

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

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

CHRISTMAS CROWD
A-ces, A-ces, A-CES, A-CES!

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

Their story has now come full circle as dressing room is decorated with a *Happy New Year* banner.

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

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

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

Lancelot bows sweeping a hand towards Kraken.

KRAKEN
Yo, slang me, Kraken.

ARETHA
"Kraken!" Can I see your monster?

Other Dancers laugh, then wave welcoming him.

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

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

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

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

RETURN TO.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

NEW POLICEMAN, in uniform, nail *Do Not Cross* tape in a big "X" across same doors.

All Club Personnel gather around one poster to read it.

HAUSER

It say --

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

HAUSER

you're all out of business, Show
Business that is.

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

BEAU

Official photographer for *The Tennessean* newspaper.

HAUSER

When did they start hirin' ...!

BEAU

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

HAUSER
(blows a smoke ring)
Thanksgiving Day.

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

Houser smiles as only an *Ebenezer Scrooge* can.

HAUSER
Merry Christmas.

BEAU
And when exactly did the Mayor sign
your *Rezoning Bill*?

HAUSER
Happiest, New Year, boy --with all
necessary legal postings in public
newspapers, includin' yours.

BEAU
Let me guess, in Obituaries?

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

BEAU
What's the charge?

HAUSER
Indecent exposure.

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

Earlier Eyewitness News van parks and same Reporter and her
Cameraman exit to begin filming. Hauser waves a hand again,
and Swat Officers begin pushing Reporter and Cameraman back.

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

HAUSER
Look around you, boy.

Beau looks. Nashville is under siege.

HAUSER

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

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

BEAU

Charge?

HAUSER

Whatever I wants, I run this town.

INT. NIGHT COURT - EARLY THAT MORNING

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

Male Bailiff enters, sees who is there. and groans.

MALE BAILIFF

Not again --All Rise.

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

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

PROSECUTOR

Yer Honor ...

MALE JUDGE

Charges?

HAUSER

Indecent expos ...

MALE JUDGE

How are you involved?

BEAU

He ramrodded a new Zoning Ordinance through Council without notifying management of its existence and permanently closed their club.

MALE JUDGE

And they were arrested for that?

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

BEAU (FILTERED)

"Charge?"

HAUSER (FILTERED)
"Whatever I wants, I run this
town."

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

MALE JUDGE
Oh really, musta' missed that memo.

PROSCECUTOR
Yer Honor...

MALE JUDGE
Save it, all Charges are Dismissed.
(strikes gavel)
And Housy, you might wanna' start
thinking about a new career,
because Public Service, ain't it.

Male Judge exits faster than Male Bailiff can react.

MALE BAILIFF
All Ri --
(raspberries)
Happy New Year, everybody go home.

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

Male Bailiff emits a tongue-whistle loud enough to stop traffic, it freezes everyone.

MALE BAILIFF
I said --Go, Home!

Everyone exits in a good mood.

ARETHA
Who wants pancakes?

All murmur agreement as doors close. Courtroom is quiet.

MALE BAILIFF
Pancakes? Nah, waffles and chicken,
now were talkin' --Hey, Judge!

Male Bailiff exits whistling turning out courtroom's lights.

INT - WAFFLE HOUSE - NOW NEW YEAR'S DAY

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

Freebird excuses himself.

JOSHUA

Where you goin'? We're heading
downtown, all the Honky Tonks are
in full swing by now.

FREEBIRD

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

ACE

Hey man, been a long night, take a
cab if you're going home.

Freebird waves, exits, revs his Corvette, and burns rubber leaving. All go back to paying their checks when they hear a horrible explosion down the road. Time stands still, then an atomic bomb-like smoke-fireball rises above the trees. Everyone exits running to get in their various cars, and head toward the smoke.

EXT. STREET NEAR WAFFLE HOUSE - MOMENTS LATER

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

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

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

Reporter and Cameraman filming, approach Paperboy.

REPORTER

What happened?

PAPERBOY

He flew around the corner, then --
(slaps flies away)
he just flew.

REPORTER

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

PAPERBOY

(begins to tear-up)
He, he waved at me, then, his car
started weaving all over, he looked
at me and, and --

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

Beau comes over and puts his arm around Paperboy.

BEAU
It's okay, and what?

PAPERBOY
(begins sobbing)
He --smiled at me.

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

BEAU
There, there, son, it wasn't your fault.
(to self)
I know exactly who's fault it was.

JOSHUA
(screams to Heaven)
If we hadn't gone to Court, we wouldn't all be here!

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

EXT. NASHVILLE CITY CEMETERY - LATER THAT WEEK

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

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

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

Cameraman and Reporter are on an overlooking hill, filming.

MINISTER, dressed in black, looking like a cross between *John Huston* and *Bela Lugosi*, finishes his Service.

MINISTER
Amen.

EVERYONE
Amen.

Beau arrives, Joshua waves him over to join them. He does.

BEAU

I'm sure Freebird appreciates the irony of being laid here.

All Dancers "eyes right" as one to look at Beau.

BEAU

A lot of Nashville's Mayors still "lie" here.

Dancers all raise the same eye-brow at Beau.

BEAU

Well, after our current Mayor went on The Phil Donahue Show back in October with his girlfriend and announced their engagement --
(now in full gossip mode)
while still married to his third wife --!

UNKNOWN MOURNERS, all former Ace-customers dressed in black, *Shhhh* Beau who lowers his voice.

BEAU

He's been under a lot of scrutiny, with some saying he only ran for office "here" to get away from his House of Representatives Ethics Committee investigation back in D.C. over his "close relationship" with a government contractor.

MINISTER

Ashes to ashes, dust to dust.

Unknown Mourners begin to exit.

BEAU

And that, Gentle Men, is what just happened down at City Hall.

All Ace of Spades and Auntie's personnel gather around Beau.

BEAU

I sent "pictures" anonymously to the Mayor's Office, and guess who just resigned from City Council for "health reasons?"

EVERYONE

Hausy?

Beau clucks his tongue and snap-finger points at them.

BEAU

Wouldn't be surprised, if he gets his own talk show someday.

EVERYONE

Hausy?

BEAU

No, our Mayor, sillies, sorry if you feel it's too little or too late, but it's the best I could do.

Reporter followed by her Cameraman come to interview them.

REPORTER

Now that Councilman Hauser has announced his resignation, what plans do the Men of Aces have in their future. Are you going to relocate your club someplace else?

LANCELOT

No.

M.O.A.

"No?"

Satin elbows Lancelot, *Tell them*, he won't, so she does.

SATIN

Turns out the owners of our club netted a hefty profit from selling their building to investors under the new zoning code and --

LANCELOT

and gave us enough bonus money, so we can finally tour Europe.

Lancelot offers his arm to Satin, she takes it leaning her head down on his lower shoulder so her wig moves.

Reporter moves her microphone towards Cool-Aid.

REPORTER

And the area's coolest disk jockey?

COOL-AID

Folks always want to dance to good music, and as you just said, I'm the best, so ...

REPORTER

Actually, I said --

Reporter moves her mike to Ace.

REPORTER

As their self-appointed spokesman,
what happens now to the Men of
Ace's?

ACE

We not only changed all the rules
in this town, we also turned them
upside down. And we wish to keep
making people think about what's
right, and what's really wrong, by
doing, what we do best.

COUNTRY

Where we doin' it?

JOSHUA

(snaps finger-waves)
Everywhere!

SLEDGE

Damn right, bubba, we don't need no
stinkin' club.

Sledge turns apologetic to Lancelot and Satin.

ARETHA

We ARE the club!

CANNON

We book ourselves as an Act, and I
know just the Agent --mine.

ACE

Hands!

All M.O.A. go hands in.

JOSHUA

We are the men of --

All hands go up and down twice, then break upwards.

M.O.A.

ACE'S!

REPORTER

(to camera)
There you have it, Nashville. Out
of death, comes life.

Satin and Lancelot kiss. M.O.A. Dancers back-slap each other.

REPORTER

The Men of Ace's are very much
alive, and may, just may, be coming
to prove it to your neighborhood
soon. Are you ready? Are any of us?
Reporting from Nashville City
Cemetery --

Joshua goes to Mercedes. Reporter hits Cameraman's shoulder
to follow them on camera. He does.

In the history of romance, there have only been two kisses
that stood out over time. This one put them both to shame.

INT. FIRST BAPTIST CHURCH - WEEKS LATER

At one of the oldest churches in Nashville, Joshua and
Mercedes, both in traditional dress, take traditional vows in
front of earlier Minister.

All of Ace of Spades and Auntie's personnel are there along
with most of their Nashville Crowds, so standing room only.

MINISTER

You may kiss the bride.

Reporter hits the shoulder of Cameraman who begins filming.

Mercedes and Joshua kiss breaking their previous record.

CAPTION: Mercedes and Joshua are still married.

FADE CAPTION: The Men of Ace still dance today.

FADE CAPTION: Nashville's Ex-Mayor did get his own talk show.

FADE OUT.