

HIGH ROLLERS

by

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One-Hour Pilot

Cold Cut Pictures
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"I don't intend for this to take on a political tone. I'm just here for the drugs."

-Nancy Reagan

TEASER

EXT. HIGHWAY - DAWN

A steady HUM as a blur of grays and flashes of white race beneath us. We TILT UP to reveal we're cruising north along I-35, veering in and out of cars.

Ascending above the traffic we see the highway wrap around a hillside, drop down and cut through a silhouetted **CITYSCAPE** standing before a static explosion of reds, yellows, and pinks...

It's the kind of sunrise that would make Terence Malick cum.

SUPER: DULUTH, MINNESOTA

We glide onward through the modest city as the sounds of industry erode into an AWFUL DIN. We whip around once, twice, and then again before stopping on a warehouse-sized **BUILDING**.

Its face is wide and paralleled by a vast parking lot. The structure's purpose is unknown, but its aura is threatening.

The GRATING DIN of the city intensifies before a sharp CLICK-CLACK SOUND transitions us to--

INT. DULUTH POLICE STATION - BRIEFING ROOM - MORNING

--a PROJECTED PHOTO of the same **BUILDING** on a screen.

CAP (O.S.)

A month ago we received a complaint from an angry mom about marijuana being dealt to teenagers at this shit-hole roller rink.

The owner of the voice, **CAP** (50s), stands at the front of the room next to a purring projector. He's dressed in uniform with double bars pinned to each lapel.

CLICK-CLACK. New slide of a **TEENAGE BOY**. He's in a hospital bed, casts on every limb of his body. QUAD ROLLER SKATES dangle from his feet.

CAP (CONT'D)

Her son smoked the weed, had a psychotic episode, and proceeded to skate down Fifth Avenue West straight into a parked sedan, breaking every bone in his body.

The blinds are closed, but slivers of light sneak through illuminating Duluth's finest (and only) team of **DETECTIVES**.

CAP (CONT'D)

I placed an undercover there to see what they could find. They got their eyes on the product, but can't quite connect it to the rink.

He peers across the room at two detectives. **VERRIER**, (50s) slicked-back hair, perfect suit, exhausted. And the sole female in the room, **BOYD**, (30s) masculine, focused, ready to roundhouse kick *anything* that gets in her way.

CAP (CONT'D)

Verrier, Boyd, this is you. Make contact with our undercover and see if you can flip an informant to get more answers.

VERRIER

No need, Cap. That place's been a hive for drug activity since the Nixon era.

CAP

And now it's spilling into our community and pissin' off taxpayers.

BOYD

So, why not blitz in there hot and heavy, seize everything, and sort it out later?

CAP

Because our undercover believes the trail doesn't stop at High Rollers. I trust her intuition.

All of the detectives share a look. Cap notices, waits for somebody to say something. They know better.

CAP (CONT'D)

You might believe Denise is green, but she's *certain* this operation is bigger than it appears and we need to follow up on it.

INT. DULUTH POLICE STATION - HALLWAY

The team of Detectives BURST out of the briefing room and plod down the hallway. Verrier and Boyd bring up the rear.

BOYD

We're not going down there are we?

VERRIER

Hell no. Not until teacher's pet Denise gets her hands on some real evidence, or an unhinged parent makes a mess of things. Otherwise, complete fucking waste of time.

EXT. HIGH ROLLERS - ALLEY - DAY

CLOSE ON THE FACE OF **HOWIE CHASE** (40s), a strung-out mess of a man. He takes a long drag from a cig. A **LARGE PURPLE MITTEN** on his opposite hand reaches up and scratches his head.

We bounce out to reveal he's sitting on a bench dressed in a bulky **PURPLE COSTUME**. A kangaroo mask sits next to him. Roller skates on his feet.

A side EXIT DOOR on the building FLINGS open. An angry man in **AWFUL KHAKIS**, storms into the alley, spots Howie.

AWFUL KHAKIS

HEY! YOU!

Howie makes eye contact and knows EXACTLY what this is about. He leaps from his seat and skates clumsily away.

Khakis gives chase, TACKLES Howie to the ground, and begins PUNCHING him repeatedly. Over and over again. Blood pours out of his nose and mouth, pooling rapidly.

Khakis finally stops, then stands up. He wipes his bloodied fist on his pants.

AWFUL KHAKIS (CONT'D)

You stop dealing drugs to my daughter you sick piece of shit!

Awful Khakis SPITS in Howie's face and RUNS OFF.

Howie grunts in pain as he tries to get up, but collapses onto his back. His bloodshot eyes stare up at the clouds.

His gaze shifts to a POLE standing in the center of the building's parking lot. At its top is a **SIGN** that's DARK and unreadable until its neon lights suddenly BURST on...

... High Rollers.

END TEASER

ACT ONE**INT. CAR - SUNSET**

SUPER: July 1985

POINT-OF-VIEW THROUGH THE WINDSHIELD as we're rushing down the street inside a 1971 CHEVY CAMARO.

We hear a quiet snippet of a NEWS REPORT on the radio as the High Rollers building comes into focus.

"Earlier today, Vice President Bush was acting commander in chief while President Reagan underwent colon cancer surgery. It was the first time in U.S. history where a..."

EXT. HIGH ROLLERS - PARKING LOT - CONTINUOUS

The lot is buzzing. Dozens of VEHICLES stream in. PEOPLE, young and old, make their way to the entrance. They all have a spring in their step, smiles aplenty.

We hear a uniquely smooth VOICE begin to speak...

VOICE (V.O.)

Well...what do I have to say, my friends? What else is there to say except...welcome. Welcome to the other place you call home..

CLOSE ON: a BICYCLE tire as it skids to a stop, kicking gravel into a parked car.

Hands YANK a bike lock out of a backpack and hook the frame to a rack.

The hands belong to **TOBI SORENSON** (18), dirty blonde with a messy side-ponytail. Her eyes simmer with a smoldering motivation and a level of maturity that rivals every thirty-year-old male's.

VOICE (V.O.)

A home where the theme of the night is good times no matter what's happening in this bittersweet world.

Not far away, the '71 **CAMARO** clunks into the parking lot.

It SWERVES between a few parked cars and narrowly misses a group of KIDS. It finally settles into an empty spot.

VOICE (V.O.)

Yes. I am *the* DJ Bobby Perry. Thank you for asking. I once again will be your chaperone through another session of good times. I'll be curating the soundtrack to your future best memories. These tunes will move you, groove you, keep those wheels spinning and, dare I say, *behoove* you to make this a night nobody will ever forget.

The driver's side door CREAKS open. NIKE low-tops CRUNCH into the gravel. The CAMERA rises up to reveal **EMMETT DAVIS** (20), ruffled, awkward. A mix between pre-spider bite Peter Parker and Axel Foley.

He inspects a duct-taped headlight hanging out of its socket. He SLAMS it back in, but it falls out. He SMASHES it in again. It falls. He shrugs. Whatever.

He grabs a pair of **BLACK ROLLER SKATES** from his passenger seat and heads for the entrance.

BOBBY PERRY (V.O.)

Sure, outside it may be close to dusk, but inside, INSIDE, it's the dawn of the weekend. Time to *carpe diem*, my friends!

Emmett maneuvers through groups of people before catching up with Tobi just as she's approaching the main entrance.

EMMETT

What's up, Tobi. You trade shifts with someone?

TOBI

I'm working weekends now. Jack said we're about to get busier and wants all hands on deck.

Emmett seems confused, but shrugs it off and follows her past the TICKET BOOTH, through the main entrance, and into...

INT. HIGH ROLLERS - LOBBY - CONTINUOUS

We PUSH past them as we're consumed by a sensory experience that we can't resist: Music THUMPS. Lights FLASH. Popcorn POPS. Slushies GUSH. Kids SCREAM.

WELCOME TO THE ROLLER RINK.

The interior feels more dated and rundown than perhaps in its heyday, but the intoxicating nostalgia can't be ignored.

RINK FLOOR

High above an expansive WOODEN RINK, we watch PEOPLE roller skate, round and round, in an orderly fashion.

We follow one of those people as they do a lap and deliver us to the...

DJ BOOTH

The hulking mass of DJ BOBBY PERRY overlooks the action.

He's large, like Orson Welles *Touch of Evil* large, and wears a Hawaiian shirt. He puffs on a CIGAR. We never see his face.

BOBBY PERRY

There are games to be played,
prizes to be won, matches to be
made, and races to be run.

(beat)

Yes, sir. Yes, ma'am. It's going to
be that kind of a night. But it'll
be over in a flash just like all
good things are.

(beat)

So grab your skates, grab a
beverage, and get down on this
rink! And for the kids, don't be
sad, don't be afraid 'cause your
favorite marsupial's here with the
treats you crave.

He pulls away from the mic, but then realizes there's a CHUBBY KID wearing an extremely tight G.I. JOE shirt trying to hand him a small PIECE OF PAPER.

Bobby Perry snatches the paper, winks at him, then puts his mouth up to the mic.

BOBBY PERRY (CONT'D)

Ah, and one more thing...

(beat)

If you have song requests bring
them up to moi. Gracias and de
nada.

The Chubby Kid takes a long slurp from his beverage and clumsily skates onto the--

RINK FLOOR

He does a loop around the rink, passes by people bouncing, spinning...

...pulling off FANCY ASS MOVES left and right.

The Chubby Kid ducks and weaves, thinks he's coordinated, but he's not. People have to move for him to compensate for his dreadful motor skills.

Satisfied, he exits the floor, passes through the--

PARTY ZONE

He cruises by a FRAZZLED MOM trying to contain fifteen SECOND GRADERS at a birthday party.

One of the Second Graders scoops ice cream into a party hat and smashes it on the head of another.

FRAZZLED MOM

Jesus Shit, Brenton! Not the
vanilla bean!

The Chubby Kid swoops past and approaches the counter of the--

SNACK BAR

He rolls up. A friendly GOMEZ RODRIGUEZ (30s) stands behind the register ready to serve him.

GOMEZ

Hola! Another Mr. Chilly, mi
hombre?

The Chubby Kid nods his head, licks his lips like an addict. Gomez PUNCHES numbers on the register.

GOMEZ (CONT'D)

Ninety-eight cents.

The Chubby Kid WHIPS out a dollar bill from his cool-as-hell velcro wallet, slaps it on the counter. Gomez puts it in the register, heads to the CUP DISPENSER, but discovers he's out.

GOMEZ (CONT'D)

Be right back!

Gomez shuffles through a set of double doors, into the--

KITCHEN

Gomez finds his twin brother, RODRIGO RODRIGUEZ, getting a lecture, mid-mop job, from JACK RIPLEY.

Jack's middle-aged and average in nearly every way except for his striking eyes that look like they're going to jump out at you at any time. Big Joe Pantoliano energy here.

JACK

Gomez! Please get over here and join your brother so I don't have to repeat myself.

GOMEZ

Sure, Jack.

He approaches Jack and Rodrigo near a huge **POPCORN MACHINE**.

JACK

Now, as I was telling Rodrigo here, you have to wipe down the inside of the popper after *each* batch. Nobody likes popcorn from a machine that has layers of old butter caked on. Plus, it's a fire hazard.

They give blank stares.

JACK (CONT'D)

Is this clear?

The brothers quickly glance at each other and then at Jack.

GOMEZ

Yes.

RODRIGO

Si.

JACK

Good!

As Jack turns to leave, Rodrigo mimes hitting him over the head with the MOP HANDLE...

...but Gomez snatches it and motions for him to relax. Rodrigo flashes a grin. Just fucking around.

INT. RINK FLOOR

CLOSE ON: a pair of shiny **BLACK SKATES** with neon-green laces as they glide along the wood.

They crisscross, weave, and spin in nearly perfect sync with the music, creating a visual poetry that tickles our brains and pulls at our heart strings.

These skates belong to Emmett, now sporting his WORK UNIFORM-- a **black-and-white striped referee jersey** and a whistle clenched between his teeth.

He flows around the rink like calculated wind. Seeing his gangly build paired with this much skill is a contradiction that makes any onlooker glance twice.

He dances along with the music, smiles and acknowledges the small groups of people out there. He assists them when they need it while keeping the flow of traffic moving.

He's good at his job.

He's in his element.

He is home.

And then, out of nowhere, the Chubby Kid ZOOMS past him with his Mr. Chilly. Emmett BLOWS his whistle.

EMMETT

Hey! No food or drink on the floor!

The Kid doesn't care and zips off.

Emmett starts after him, but the music fades--

BOBBY PERRY (O.S.)

My dear, dear Emmett Davis...

--he glances to the DJ booth.

BOBBY PERRY (O.S.) (CONT'D)

My little eyes spy some good people
at the rental counter chomping at
the bit to get out here. Can you
please make your way over and
provide them with some wheels?

He gives a thumbs up to Bobby Perry and SPEEDS OFF.

ARCADE AREA

Emmett rolls past a row of skeet-ball arcade games and spots a **FRUSTRATED LITTLE GIRL** struggling to put on her skates. He approaches her.

EMMETT
You doing alright?

FRUSTRATED LITTLE GIRL
My skates hurt my feet! They're too
tight, I think...

Emmett kneels down, gets eye-level with her.

EMMETT
These are new, huh?

FRUSTRATED LITTLE GIRL
Yeah. I got them for my birthday.

EMMETT
Right. The thing with new skates is
that they can be a little
uncomfortable at first. The leather
has to form to your foot. It could
take a few skates to get them
really broken in and feeling good.

FRUSTRATED LITTLE GIRL
But I want them to fit now!

EMMETT
I know but the best thing you can
do is bite the bullet and put these
puppies to use.

FRUSTRATED LITTLE GIRL
My feet hurt, mister!

EMMETT
Yes, you've screamed that three
times now. I get it. I'm listening,
but you are not listening to me.

She bursts into tears.

EMMETT (CONT'D)
Wait. No. No! Don't cry!

Nope. She cries HARDER.

EMMETT (CONT'D)
Oh, no! Shhh. Shhhhh! Please.
Shhhh. Please stop.

Emmett panics, looking around, not sure what to do, but
then...

Tobi-- the girl with the bike and backpack from the parking lot-- glides out of nowhere with a pair of **WELL-USED RENTAL SKATES**. She crouches down next to the girl and starts to remove the new ones.

TOBI

I hear someone needs a pair of better fitting skates.

FRUSTRATED LITTLE GIRL

My skates--too tight--hurt--this guy's full of himself--I just want to skate with frieeeeeeeeeeendsss!

TOBI

Let's try these.

Tobi slips on the used pair and laces them up.

TOBI (CONT'D)

There. How do those feel?

The Frustrated Little Girl stands up, moves around. A smile forms on her face.

FRUSTRATED LITTLE GIRL

Better!

TOBI

Great! If there's *anything* else you need, you just let us know. We want you to have the most wonderful night ever. Doesn't that sound nice?

FRUSTRATED LITTLE GIRL

A Mr. Chilly sounds nice...

Tobi shoots Emmett a look. He rolls his eyes, pulls out a dollar bill.

The Frustrated Little Girl grabs it and jets.

EMMETT

(shouts after her)

Keep it off the floor!

TOBI

Okay, easy dude. Before you make her cry again.

Emmett nods in agreement. They skate off together, out of the Arcade area and toward the--

RENTAL COUNTER

Emmett eyes Tobi as she rolls behind the counter and starts assisting people.

She points at a **TEENAGER**.

TEENAGER
Pair of elevens.

EMMETT
Thanks, Tobi. I'll take it from here.

Tobi locates a pair of size eleven QUAD ROLLER SKATES on a rack behind her. She hands them to the Teenager. The Teenager hands her a TICKET and smiles.

TOBI
Enjoy.

Emmett swoops next to her.

EMMETT
Did you hear me?

TOBI
Yes.

EMMETT
Then what are you doing?

TOBI
Working.

She nods at the **NEXT CUSTOMER**.

TOBI (CONT'D)
Size?

EMMETT
I see that, but I got this covered.

NEXT CUSTOMER
Nine!

TOBI
(to Emmett)
Jack's orders.

EMMETT

That's just...that's just silly.
Two people aren't needed for a job
like this.

She hands skates to the customer, gets a ticket in return.

EMMETT (CONT'D)

How about you head back to the
snack bar until I clear this up
with Jack?

TOBI

Whatever, man. I'm just doing what
the boss wants me to do.

Emmett watches her as she skates away. OFF SCREEN, someone
clears their throat.

He turns to see a man, **FRANK**, standing at the other end of
the counter. He can barely open his eyes and is dressed for a
Phish concert

Emmett rolls over to greet him.

EMMETT

Frank. Hey.

FRANK

It's *magic skate* time, my man.

Emmett quickly scans the area.

EMMETT

(hushed)

Magic skates. Sure. Size?

FRANK

I just asked my inner soul and it
desperately craves...

A long beat.

FRANK (CONT'D)

...a small.

Emmett nods and slips through the--

SKATE RACKS

He approaches a short, **LONE RACK** of skates on the back wall.

To a passerby, this rack might appear to be full of worn-out, retired quads. *HOWEVER*, the skates are uniquely separated in columns labeled *SMALL*, *MEDIUM*, and *LARGE*.

He grabs a pair of smalls.

INT. RENTAL COUNTER

Emmett hands the skates to Frank.

EMMETT
Twenty bucks.

FRANK
Let me just inspect the merchandise.

He turns one of the skates upside down. A **SMALL BAG OF MARIJUANA** drops out.

Emmett GASPS. He quickly grabs the bag, *SHOVES* it back into Frank's skate.

EMMETT
(whispers)
Jesus! Take it outside or by the lockers!

FRANK
Hey, it's cool, it's cool. I'm low-key. I'm inconspicuous. Thanks, man.

Frank drops some CASH on the counter and drifts away.

Emmett pulls out a **LOCK BOX** from under the counter. He discreetly stuffs Frank's dough through a slot in the top.

A **BURNOUT** approaches.

BURNOUT
Uh, hey. Magic skates, please. Medium.

Emmett studies him, suspiciously.

EMMETT
Sorry, do I know you?

BURNOUT
Uh...

The Burnout glances over his shoulder at Frank standing in the distance.

FRANK

It's cool, Emmett! That's Christoph. He's with me!

Emmett puts his hands up to hush him.

EMMETT

C'mon, man. Keep it down.

Frank gets it, suddenly acts nonchalant. He turns to walk away but SLAMS into a table.

Appalled by Frank's stupidity, Emmett quickly darts back to the lone skate rack which takes us into a...

MAGIC SKATES MONTAGE!

...he grabs medium Magic Skates from the special rack... hands them to the BURNOUT... Burnout hands him money... Emmett drops the money in the Lock Box... Another burnout approaches the counter... Emmett grabs skates from the rack... he hands skates to the burnout... the burnout gives him money... he puts the money into the lock box... Some other burnout approaches... Emmett grabs skates... hands skates off... cash dropped on counter... Emmett stuffs cash into the box... etc... etc... until...

BOOM. Emmett can't stuff ANYMORE MONEY into the box because it's FULL.

He leaves the counter, lock box in hand.

INT. LOCKERS

Emmett passes by a group of twenty-something **PREPPY GUYS** lacing up skates.

Two of them, **TERENCE** and **LEE**, immediately recognize him.

TERENCE

Holy shit! Emmett Davis!? What is up?! Long time, no see. How's the skate business?

EMMETT

Hey. Terry. Lee. Business is good. How's uh...

LEE

Winona State? It's AWESOME. Still
majoring in beer and pussy.

The Preppy Boys guffaw in unison.

EMMETT

Beer and pussy. Sounds rad.

TERENCE

It is rad. And plenty to go around.
Not too late to get your ass to
college, my man.

EMMETT

My career is just really taking off
around here. Lot of, you know,
responsibility.

LEE

(holds back laugh)

Sure. Sure. Well, if you ever find
yourself down there for a visit,
look us up.

EMMETT

Far out. Thanks.

Emmett happily moseys off until overhearing Terence, Lee, and
the others mock his "career" in the background.

Feeling humiliated, he darts away.

END ACT ONE

ACT TWO**INT. PARTY ZONE**

Detectives Verrier and Boyd sit at a table decorated for a kid's birthday party; balloons, napkins, plates. They both wear PARTY HATS and look absolutely MISERABLE.

A balloon floats into Boyd's face. She SHOVES it away.

VERRIER

Hey, did I ever tell you I'm cheating on my wife?

BOYD

I don't remember.

VERRIER

Oh! You'd remember if I told you, trust me.

BOYD

I don't think I could stomach it.

VERRIER

Well, my new dame can if you know what I mean.

(off-look)

Eh?

(off-look)

Ehhh?

(off-look)

Okay.

BOYD

Let's not talk about gross shit all night, please.

VERRIER

What would you rather do? Go out there and skate with the rest of the mongoloids?

BOYD

No, I'd rather connect with the undercover and get things moving.

She looks around before seeing...

...Tobi gliding toward the table from the snack bar in slow-motion. A HEAVENLY GUITAR SOLO RIPS as Boyd stares at her, mesmerized.

INT. HALLWAY - CONTINUOUS

Emmett glides down a shadowy corridor. He stops at a long row of **FRAMED PHOTOS** hanging on the wall.

Above are the words: "*HIGH ROLLERS OF THE MONTH*"

On the bottom of each frame is a label of the MONTH and YEAR.

At the start we see a variety of **EMPLOYEE PORTRAITS...**

...but as we go further down the hallway, they quickly transition into *only* PHOTOS OF EMMETT. Month after month after month.

Emmett beams proudly at his accomplishments until he reaches the end of the row where an **EMPTY FRAME** for "*JULY '85*" hangs.

He places his hand gently on it, then bows his head as if in deep prayer.

INT. JACK'S OFFICE

MATCHCUT to a **FRAMED PHOTO OF A YOUNG JACK RIPLEY**, very svelte with flowing hair, as an artistic roller-skating champion. He poses, mid-pirouette, in a skin-tight, elaborate outfit.

There are **DOZENS OF PHOTOS** and **ACCOLADES** of other moments from Jack's performing days. He was surprisingly handsome back then.

CUT TO Jack seated at a large desk counting cash furiously from the lock box.

His dimly lit office is cramped and cluttered with random boxes and skate merchandise; controlled chaos much like his personality.

He finishes counting and hops to his feet.

JACK

Looks good. Here's your taste.

He hands a small wad of money and the lock box back to Emmett, then NODS to his photos and accolades.

JACK (CONT'D)

I miss it more and more every day
it seems.

EMMETT

It's too bad you quit.

JACK
Retired!

EMMETT
Yeah, right, er, that's what--

JACK
You see this?!

CLOSE ON a photo of him holding a billowy semi-finalist ribbon while being propped up by his super proud MOM and DAD.

JACK (CONT'D)
This was the night of the third annual Reno Roll-Off. My knee blew out on a landing during the semis. That's what did me in. A career ending injury. *Not* quitting. Jack Ripley is no god damned quitter!

EMMETT
My mistake.

Jack thinks for a long beat, lost in another time.

JACK
C'est la vie or some shit.

He walks over to a large, framed **PORTRAIT OF ELVIS PRESLEY** (fat, near death Elvis, CIRCA 1970s). Jack removes the picture to reveal a **WALL SAFE**.

Emmett watches as Jack carefully enters the combination...

8-16-77

The safe door pops open. Inside it's a mess just like everything else.

EMMETT
Jack. I have to ask.
(beat)
Why'd you move Tobi to weekends? To the rental counter?

Jack shoves almost all of the cash into the safe but keeps a **SIZABLE STACK** of it on his desk.

JACK
Well, she was able to rationally justify *why* she can be more of an asset elsewhere.

EMMETT

What was her justification?

JACK

What's it matter? You're the one who trained her. Figured you'd be glad to have her covering your ass.

EMMETT

I'm not sure she's ready for that side of the business.

JACK

Don't be so naive. She's more than ready, my boy. And, hey, newsflash. This is still *my* joint and I can change whatever *I* want! And, heads-up, things are going to be changing a lot around here.

Jack walks over to a bookshelf...

JACK (CONT'D)

Look at this shit.

...and picks up an **ANTIQUUE ROLLER SKATE**.

JACK (CONT'D)

This is an early in-line skate. The three ball-bearing wheels, in line, give more speed with less effort. There's no boot, so it's light. You just strap it on your shoes and you're ready to roll...

He admires it, lovingly, and gently places it on the shelf.

JACK (CONT'D)

My old man, bless his enlarged heart, bought this pair for only five bucks back in forty-nine. Little did he know then that these would be the future of our industry...or did he?

Jack ponders this deeply. Emmett doesn't understand.

JACK (CONT'D)

Come. Powwow with me.

He grabs the stack of cash from his desk, heads to the door. Emmett follows.

INT. HALLWAY - CONTINUOUS

Jack marches down the hallway as Emmett rolls after him.

JACK

In-lines are coming back, you know?
They're cooler, faster, and about
to make a huge resurgence.

EMMETT

Pssh. What about quads?

JACK

Fuck quads. We need to stay
relevant.

EMMETT

So, what, you want to buy hundreds
of in-line skates? That's gonna be
way too expensive.

JACK

Exactly, Emmett! Exactly. In order
to afford the upgrades our business
so badly needs, we need to *upgrade*
our inventory.

Jack stops walking and slaps a **SMALL BAG OF COCAINE** in
Emmett's hand.

Emmett looks at it, realizes what it is, and quickly tosses
it back.

EMMETT

Coke...Cocaine? Are you serious?
What's wrong with weed?!

JACK

Just like in-lines, it's becoming
all the rage. It's in music,
movies, and on television. America
wants it and America gets what she
wants.

Jack walks off, leaving Emmett to consider this for a moment
before he quickly catches up with him.

EMMETT

But what about Armageddon?

JACK

Armageddon? Armageddon can go pound
sand.

EMMETT

Wait. This stuff is coming from someone else?

JACK

Now you're catching on. Yes, I've made a new partnership with some very sensible, and stylish, gents. So, fuck Armageddon! I've never even met the man! You think I give a shit about him or the dank-ass weed he has schlepped up here on the refrigerator trucks?

EMMETT

But aren't you worried he's going to be upset when he finds out we're working with a different supplier?

Jack opens a DOOR and steps into the--

INT. TICKET OFFICE - CONTINUOUS

They enter a small room with a **TICKET WINDOW** that faces the parking lot.

A young woman, **CRYSTAL** (early 20s) sits near a cash register. She's wide-eyed and bubbly.

JACK

I'm afraid that's the wrong attitude, Emmett.

He motions to Crystal.

JACK (CONT'D)

Emmett, this is Crystal. She's covering for Rose who's sick or some shit.

CRYSTAL

(very cheery)
Hello!

EMMETT

(doesn't care)
Okay hi.

JACK

Let me show you something.
(to Crystal)
Excuse me.

Jack pushes past Crystal, pops open the REGISTER DRAWER, displaying some cash.

JACK (CONT'D)

For the past few years we have been going in circles.

He pulls out a **SMALL STACK OF BILLS**.

JACK (CONT'D)

This dough barely keeps the lights on, let alone you, or Crystal here, employed. Now is the time to switch course. Diversify. To invest all the *other dough* back into the business--renovate the snack bar, refinish the rink floor, maybe build a lobby fountain--I DON'T KNOW! This place is going to be like new, a thousand times better than Rick's Skate Hole.

He deftly COMBINES the stack of cash from his office with the bills from the register and puts them in the till.

EMMETT

I'm sorry, Jack, but this seems totally careless. We aren't equipped for a change this...heavy.

Jack SLAMS the register drawer shut, cutting him off.

JACK

You, Emmett Davis! You are not equipped for this change!

Awkward moment of silence as he calms himself.

JACK (CONT'D)

Word's already been put out. Our customers are expecting it and our partners are showing up soon to deliver the first package themselves. This is happening whether you like it or not. Powwow fucking over.

Jack stomps out, leaving Emmett with Crystal.

CRYSTAL

Oof. He sure seems heated.

Emmett stares off into space, concerned.

CRYSTAL (CONT'D)
 Say, what package was he talkin'
 bout, do ya think?

He snaps out of it and calmly turns to her.

EMMETT
 Just some fancy new skates that'll
 never pay off.

He leaves the room.

INT. SNACK BAR

Tobi stands behind the counter, annoyed. Jack approaches.

JACK
 Tobi, what the hell you doing?

TOBI
 Emmett told me to come back here.

JACK
 Fuck that. It's busy and only gonna
 get busier. Take this and go back
 to the rental counter.

Jack tosses her something. She catches it and unfolds it.

It's a **BLACK-AND-WHITE STRIPED REFEREE** shirt. One just like
 Emmett's.

TOBI
 Jack...I...

JACK
 Consider yourself deputized.

TOBI
 Thank you.

JACK
 And don't worry about, Emmett.
 You're smarter than him in
 different ways. You two will make a
 good team if you don't piss each
 other off.
 (beat)
 Have fun!

Jack slinks away.

Tobi slips the shirt on, tucks it in, and runs her hands along it. She's very pleased with herself.

INT. CAR - NIGHT

POINT-OF-VIEW THROUGH THE WINDSHIELD as we barrel down a dark road. A **MOTH ORNAMENT** dangles from the REAR-VIEW MIRROR.

On the radio, a COMMERCIAL for Rick's Skate Hole.

"Not only do we have a rink for you to roll on at Rick's Skate Hole, but, yes, we have a ball pit, yes, we have an arcade, and ONE-HUNDRED PERCENT YES to free Tuesday skating for toddlers and pets..."

INT. ARCADE AREA

Emmett rolls along, carrying a CRATE. Tobi rounds a pinball machine and they CRASH into each other.

The crate drops to the floor as Emmett FALLS on his ass. ORANGE WHEELS fly everywhere.

Tobi catches herself before falling.

TOBI

Sorry! I'm sorry!

He leers up at her and immediately notices the referee shirt. Tobi notices that he noticed.

TOBI (CONT'D)

Isn't it rad! Jack finally gave me one! He told me to get back to the rental counter too, so...

Emmett gets to his feet.

EMMETT

Why don't you hold off on that until I can talk to him some more? There's a lot on his mind right now and I'm not sure he's thinking straight...

TOBI

Jesus Christ, dude. Why can't you just be like, "congrats on your promotion, Tobi"?

She drops to the ground, starts to pick up the quad wheels.

EMMETT

You're right. Sorry.

Emmett squats down and joins her.

EMMETT (CONT'D)

It's just... don't put too much stock into it is all. Jack's looking to make some changes around here that could put us all outta work. So it's a good thing you'll be off to school in the fall.

Tobi looks away, sheepishly. Emmett notices.

EMMETT (CONT'D)

You're still planning on going to college, right?

TOBI

It's an option, yeah.

EMMETT

What's the other option? Stay here?

TOBI

Things are going well right now. Paid off most of my grandma's debt. Finally starting to save a little. Plus, if Jack's new product hits, we'll all stand to make some serious money.

EMMETT

What the hell do you know about Jack's new product?

TOBI

He asked my advice and I told him he'd be dumb if he didn't start selling it.

Emmett's jaw drops open.

TOBI (CONT'D)

Everyone is doing blow these days. Lots to be made off rich kids and their rich folks.

(off-look)

I even told him I'd deal it. You know, if you're uncomfortable.

EMMETT

I am comfortable! I'm comfortable dealing *anything*. I am the *ultimate* dealer of things.

TOBI

Don't be sensitive. It's a different game, you know? Pot's chill. Old school.

Emmett stares at her, at a loss for words.

TOBI (CONT'D)

Whatever. I just think you're going to want...no, *need* me around for this.

She gets up and skates off.

Emmett finishes gathering the wheels scattered about.

EXT. PARKING LOT - NIGHT

A hot-off-the-lot **1985 TOYOTA CELICA SUPRA** PURRS into a parking spot, comes to a halt. Plates from ONTARIO CANADA.

The car's engine cuts off as two pairs of **WHITE SLIP-ON LOAFERS** step out from each side of the car.

Cigarettes drop to the ground. The loafers, in unison, TWIST the cigs out before moving toward the entrance.

INT. HIGH ROLLERS - LOBBY - CONTINUOUS

The doors slowly open to find Jack waiting with a smile from ear to ear.

JACK

Welcome, welcome my Canadian comrades!

The reverse reveals TWO MEN, dressed nearly identical and carrying **SUITCASES**, as they enter through the doors.

They wear **WHITE ARMANI JACKETS** with T-SHIRTS and **WHITE LINEN PANTS**. They both wear **WAYFARER RAY BANS** and have stylish, mullet haircuts. Their look inspired by Miami Vice.

These gentlemen are the CANADIANS. **ANDRE BASSETT** (40s) and **PIERRE LANE** (30s).

JACK (CONT'D)

Andre. Pierre. I can't tell you what a pleasure it is to finally meet you gentleman. Been a long time coming!

They say nothing.

JACK (CONT'D)

Oh my, those are gorgeous jackets. I bet you didn't get those from K-Mart.

Again, nothing.

JACK (CONT'D)

Anyway! You two must be famished after the long drive down. Let's head over to the snack bar, grab a couple chili dogs and talk shop.

He cheerfully leads them to the Party Zone.

RINK FLOOR

Emmett slowly glides along, watching Jack and the Canadians from afar.

PARTY ZONE

Jack and the Canadians sit down at a secluded booth. One of the suitcases sits on the table in front of them.

JACK

Legend has it that this place is built on Ojibwe burial grounds. The previous owner sold it because he claimed it was haunted and couldn't take it anymore. I haven't experienced anything except heard a few voices here and there, maybe screams, but who knows if I'm just going crazy 'cause running a business can push you over the edge, am I right?

The Canadians stare at Jack as he laughs at himself.

JACK (CONT'D)

Okay, let's get down to business.

Emmett rolls up, interrupts.

EMMETT

Jack. I need a word.

JACK

Well, looky-looky who it is?
Fellas, this is Emmett. Emmett
Davis. He's my main man around
here.

They don't care.

EMMETT

Jack, can I talk to you, please? In
private?

JACK

Of course, but only after this very
important meeting.

EMMETT

Okay, thanks for being flexible.

(beat)

So I thought about it and...in-line
skates are NOT the way to go.

JACK

No, that can wait. This right here
is a meeting regarding an exciting
business opportunity. These boys
are going to start supplying us
with their very fine product.

Pierre POPS the lock on one of the suitcases. He spins it
around, and opens it for Jack and Emmett to see.

Inside, are a few pairs of brand-new **ROLLER BLADES**.

Jack and Emmett glance at each other, confused.

Pierre reaches inside and lifts the blades revealing a FALSE
BOTTOM. Underneath, the case is lined with bricks of
glistening **COCAINE**.

JACK (CONT'D)

My, my...whiter than the back of my
knees.

Jack SLAMS down the lid on the case and SHOVES it into
Emmett's chest.

JACK (CONT'D)

(to Emmett)

Take this to my office while we
finish up.

EMMETT

I'm serious, Jack. It's not gonna work out the way you think it is...

Jack's eyes grow wide, his frustration reaching a boiling point. He flashes a calm smile to the Canadians.

JACK

Please excuse me, gentlemen.

He pulls Emmett away from the booth for a private chat.

JACK (CONT'D)

I'm trying to conduct business here and you're tap-dancing on my last fucking nerve! What is your problem?!

EMMETT

We're a small operation. With small stakes. Coke is gonna change that.

JACK

Why can't you see the big picture here?

EMMETT

Why can't you see the dangerous position you're putting us in?

JACK

I'm growing our business. There's a huge, untapped market that we can service. It's like when we put in the air hockey tables. Supply and demand, baby!

EMMETT

Cocaine could open us up to the cops--

JACK

--local imbeciles--

EMMETT

--to Armageddon--

JACK

--what Armageddon doesn't know won't hurt us--

EMMETT

--plus, it's just gross. A gross fad that *kills* people.

JACK

Who are you? Nancy Reagan? Save me the moral fucking dilemma you've suddenly found yourself in and take that case to my office and start prepping it for sale while I go convince our Canadian friends that we are *sane* enough to handle their product.

Jack pulls a folded-up piece of paper out of his pocket and hands it to Emmett.

JACK (CONT'D)

Follow these. Use the scale and baking soda on my desk.

Jack struts back over to the Canadians with a big grin on his face. He claps his hands together.

JACK (CONT'D)

Who's ready for some nachos grande?

END ACT TWO

ACT THREE**EXT. HIGH ROLLERS - PARKING LOT - DUSK**

The lights of the High Rollers sign GLOW as darkness falls.
The parking lot is buzzing with even more activity.

INT/EXT. TICKET BOOTH

Verrier and Boyd approach the window.
Crystal comes to the glass. They immediately recognize her.

VERRIER
(surprised)
Oh. Hey, Denise.

A ROWDY PACK OF KIDS and their PARENTS line up behind them.

CRYSTAL/DENISE
You must have me mistaken for
someone else.
(points to name tag)
I'm *Crystal*. Have we met before?

BOYD
Uh, no. No, we haven't.

VERRIER
(robotically)
Right! I do not know you at all.
You are a complete stranger to me.

DENISE
How can I help you?

BOYD
Turns out we wanna skate after all.
Need tickets for two pairs.

Boyd gives Denise a wink. Denise gives a firm nod, pulls out **TWO TICKETS**. She scribbles something on the back, slides them through the window.

DENISE
That'll be five-fifty.

Boyd grabs the tickets, hands them to Verrier, then passes cash to Denise.

Verrier looks at the back of the ticket.

"Moving new product tonight. Hard stuff?"

VERRIER

Thanks.

BOYD

We'll give it a look and be back if we need more.

DENISE

(winks)

Sounds good, strangers.

Verrier and Boyd walk away from the ticket window.

VERRIER

(whispers)

She's having way too much fun and it pisses me off.

BOYD

Fucking Denise.

INT. JACK'S OFFICE

Emmett sits at Jack's desk in front of a **WHITE POWDERY MESS**.

He stares at the unfolded piece of paper Jack gave him. It's a cluster of scribbled words, equations, and quantities.

He spoons small amounts of cocaine and baking soda onto the scale, watching it carefully.

Once he hits the correct weight, he slowly dumps the mixture into a plastic bag and seals it. He tosses it into a box that contains a bunch of other bags.

He grabs the last brick of cocaine from the suitcase and starts to open it, but then stops.

He notices Jack's **ROLODEX** on the desk. He glances up at the door to confirm he's alone.

He spins it to 'A' and flips open on ARMAGEDDON. It has a phone number and scribbled next to it:

"Ask for Santiago."

Emmett stares at it for a moment before grabbing the phone and punching in the numbers.

He waits for someone to pick up...

EMMETT

(into phone)

Uh, hello. Is this Santiago?

(listens)

It's um...just someone who wants to help. I'm at High Rollers. I think you should know that things are changing here and...I'm not sure it's for the best. I really don't think Armageddon would be pleased by what's happening...

(listens)

It means...it means...it means cocaine, okay? We're going to start dealing cocaine. From a different supplier...

(listens)

Uh...I shouldn't...

(beat)

Uh...

(beat)

Prank call! This was a prank call, you dip! Ha ha, got you!

Emmett SMASHES the phone onto the receiver.

He sits there wide-eyed and frozen, realizing he probably fucked up.

He quickly flips the Rolodex card to something else, grabs the box of cocaine bags and rushes out of the office.

INT. SKATE RACKS

Emmett frantically loads bags of cocaine into roller skates.

He drags an EMPTY RACK over and positions it next to the original Magic Skates rack.

He creates four sections *S, M, L*, writes "GREEN" on the wall above the original rack and "WHITE" above the new one.

He wipes sweat from his brow, steps back to examine his work. He takes a deep BREATH, regathers himself.

EMMETT

Okay...

INT. RENTAL COUNTER

Emmett repositions the lock box under the counter and accidentally knocks Tobi's **BACKPACK** onto the floor.

As he picks it up the contents pour out, including a small stack of **OFFICIAL-LOOKING DOCUMENTS**.

Emmett squints at one of them. It reads:

"UNIVERSITY APPLICATION FOR ADMISSION"

He shuffles through the other papers. More applications for several different schools.

Nothing is filled out except Tobi's name.

TOBI (O.S.)

Why are you going through my stuff,
creep?

He looks up to find Tobi standing there.

EMMETT

You told me you were already in at
MacCalester?

She SNATCHES the backpack away and SHOVES the applications and the rest of her belongings back inside.

TOBI

I can deal with you breathing down
my neck, but going through my stuff
is totally crossing the line!

She ZIPS up her backpack and speeds off. Emmett remains, dumbfounded.

INT. VEHICLE - NIGHT

POINT-OF-VIEW THROUGH A WINDSHIELD. The heart of DOWNTOWN MINNEAPOLIS. We're cruising along WASHINGTON AVE, hit an entrance ramp onto I-35.

ON THE DASH the RPM gauge nears redline, then downshifts. A moment of relief for the vehicle. But then the speedometer approaches 45 MPH and continues to climb. No signs of slowing down.

On the radio...

"The mega benefit concert, LIVE AID, continues on into the night with performances still to come from Madonna, Freddy Mercury, Paul McCartney, The Cars, Neil Young, Phil Collins, Duran Duran and many more..."

INT. RINK FLOOR

Lights on the floor dim as DJ Bobby Perry places his lips to the MICROPHONE.

BOBBY PERRY (O.S.)
Ladies and gentlemen, if you could
please direct your attention to the
center of the rink...

Colorful spotlights track around searching for someone.
Someone important.

BOBBY PERRY (O.S.) (CONT'D)
It is my pleasure to present to you
a phenom in the world of roller
skating...

Fog creeps onto the rink from an unknown source.

BOBBY PERRY (O.S.) (CONT'D)
An absolute master of dance...

A group of twelve **SCANTILY CLAD WOMEN** skate onto the floor,
epically splitting the fog.

BOBBY PERRY (O.S.) (CONT'D)
An artist on wheels, some say a
Picasso on skates...

The Women form two lines as they CLAP along with the beat of
the music.

BOBBY PERRY (O.S.) (CONT'D)
I present to you, the one, the
only...Reuuuuuuuubennnn the Roller-
Roooooo!

Flying through the air wearing a purple kangaroo mascot
costume is **REUBEN THE ROLLER-ROO!**

Loud APPLAUSE and CHEERS come from unseen onlookers, kids and
adults alike. They are incredibly excited for this. Honestly,
too excited.

Reuben LANDS perfectly on the rink in formation with the
female back-up skaters.

They begin an intricate DANCE ROUTINE. Reuben SPINS with
precision, elegance, and grace.

The dance is intense, yet erotic and we are most definitely
aroused.

Whoever is behind the mask of the Roller-Roo is obviously a champion of entertainment, having a wonderful time, and couldn't imagine doing anything else with their life.

SMASH CUT TO...

INT. MEN'S RESTROOM

Howie Chase, who we saw get pummeled earlier by a khaki-wearing madman, sits in a bathroom stall, smoking.

His face is bruised, scratched up. He's definitely been crying too. Living the good life!

We hear the distant voice of Bobby Perry over the speakers.

BOBBY PERRY (O.S.)
...a phenom in the world of roller skating entertainment, an absolute master of dance!

Howie plays with a **BASIC GOLD RING** on his finger.

BOBBY PERRY (CONT'D)
An artist on wheels, some say a Picasso with skates...

HOWIE
(to himself)
You fucking piece of shit...

BOBBY PERRY (O.S.)
I present to you now, the marsupial master. The one, the only...Reuuuubennnn the Roller-Rooooo!

He SLAMS the KANGAROO MASK on, stands up and FLUSHES the toilet. He rushes out of the stall.

INT. RINK FLOOR

Reuben the Roller-Roo rolls awkwardly onto the floor as he's mobbed by a **CROWD OF CHILDREN**.

A cheery, but amateurish, **ROLLER-ROO THEME SONG** toots along as he playfully dances with kids.

INT. LOBBY

Jack escorts the Canadians toward the entrance.

JACK

So, are you gentlemen hanging
around for the night or heading
back to the motherland right away?

The Canadians say nothing.

JACK (CONT'D)

Because if you're staying, I could
suggest a few places to...

(off-look)

Ah, who am I kidding? There's
nothing to do here except drugs and
stare at the lift bridge. Which is
pretty spectacular if you haven't
seen it in action.

(off-look)

Well I just can't thank you both
enough for delivering this fine,
fine product. I'll let you know how
it's received by our clientele and
we can go from there.

Emmett frantically rolls up to Jack.

EMMETT

Jack!

He spins around to Emmett, surprised.

JACK

What the shit is wrong now?

EMMETT

You can't let Tobi work the Magic
Skates.

JACK

Jesus Christ.

EMMETT

She doesn't need to get wrapped up
in this. She has a future.

JACK

You don't consider *this* a future?

EMMETT

For me? Sure. But Tobi doesn't know
what else is out there.

JACK

Emmett...she's a big girl.
Perfectly capable of saying yes, or
no. She tells me she's ready. That
she *wants* this. What am I supposed
to do?

EMMETT

Tell her to forget about it! Tell
her she doesn't deserve to--

Jack SLAPS Emmett across the face.

JACK

(off-look)

You were embarrassing yourself.
You'll thank me one day, trust me.

(beat)

Now listen carefully. It's too
late. Whatever happens, Tobi is in
this thing. For the long haul.
Understand? Would you rather have
her here, close to us, or out there
knowing what she knows about our
business?

Jack smiles at him warmly.

JACK (CONT'D)

It's safer for everyone if she's
here. Plus, she's fucking smart!
Give her a chance. She'll make you
proud one day, just like you've
made me.

Emmett pushes him away and skates off.

Jack turns back to the Canadians...

JACK (CONT'D)

I'm very sorry gentlemen--

...but they're already gone. He takes a few steps forward,
looks for them, but there's no trace. A flash of sadness
across his face.

INT. SNACK BAR

Gomez and Rodrigo carry armfuls of Mr. Chillys onto the
counter. **CUSTOMERS** snatch them up.

TOBI (O.S.)

You guys miss me yet?

Tobi leans against the counter, chugging a soda.

RODRIGO
Solo la vista...

Gomez ELBOWS Rodrigo in the ribs.

TOBI
What'd he say?

GOMEZ
A bad joke. What's up?

TOBI
Emmett is what's up-- up in my shit
again.

GOMEZ
He can be quite the determined
little punta.

RODRIGO
Es blows, chica.

GOMEZ
You know he only does it cuz he
cares about you, yeah?

TOBI
If he cared, he'd let me make my
own choices instead of forcing me
into whatever he missed out on.

GOMEZ
See, that's where you misunderstand
a guy like Emmett. He's been raised
by High Rollers. This is all that
matters to him. Working here. Being
High Roller of the Month. Being
Jack's right hand man. If it all
went away, he'd have nothing. For
him, it's never been a choice.

TOBI
So, what do I do?

GOMEZ
Well, you can talk to him. Tell him
how you really feel...

TOBI
Or?

GOMEZ

Or, give him a taste of his own
medicine.

RODRIGO

Justo entre las piernas.

GOMEZ

Nothing drastic. Let a little taste
of what it feels like when someone
tries to shape your destiny.

She sits quietly, considering this, then turns to see
Howie/Reuben dancing on the floor with a bunch of kids.

An idea lights up in her eyes.

INT. RENTAL COUNTER

Emmett disinfects some skates when two greasy COKE HEADS
strut up to the counter.

They wear sport coats and have cheap gold chains popping out
of their half-buttoned silk shirts. They come off as
neurotic, a much different scene than the usual laid-back
stoners.

EMMETT

Hey, how can I--

COKE HEAD 1

Hey, hey. We're doing good as shit.
Good as shit. Thanks for asking.
You?

Emmett opens his mouth to respond--

COKE HEAD 2

Good to hear. I like that, I like
this fucking guy. Hey, we need
magic skates.

EMMETT

Don't know what you're talking
about.

COKE HEAD 2

Don't know? The fuck is this?
Supposed to come here. Ask you for
magic skates. Give ya cash. You
give us some booger sugar.

COKE HEAD 1
That's how this is supposed to
work. Supposed to work.

EMMETT
Uh, no offense but I've never seen
you guys before. No one's mentioned
you're coming by. Therefore, I can
give you skates...

He holds up a pair of stinky old quads.

EMMETT (CONT'D)
...but can't help you otherwise

Annoyed, the Coke Heads confer quietly for a beat before
turning back.

COKE HEAD 1
Howie! Howie!

COKE HEAD 2
Yeah, yeah. Howie. Kangaroo guy.
Sent us to you. Didn't have enough
in his...what? What do ya call it?

Coke Head 2 motions to his abdomen.

COKE HEAD 1
The what? The pockets?

EMMETT
The pouch.

COKE HEAD 1
The pouch!

COKE HEAD 2
The pouch!

EMMETT
Howie sent you?
(sighs)
Fine. What size?

COKE HEAD 1
How 'bout the size for a couple of
big boys?

COKE HEAD 2
Let's do 'em all. Every size!

COKE HEAD 1
Fuck it, hell yeah! This is our
night!

COKE HEAD 2

Our night!

EMMETT

Let's just start with a large...

Emmett rolls back through the racks. The Coke Heads hug, pat each other on the back and bro out.

INT. HALLWAY

We glide down the hallway toward Jack's office.

We linger on the spot where a High Roller of the Month photo used to be.

INT. WOMEN'S RESTROOM

Tobi's in a stall, on the floor, struggling to take apart what looks to be a **PICTURE FRAME**.

Next to her sits a different frame. The empty one labeled JULY '85.

EXT. PAY PHONES - NIGHT

Verrier and Boyd huddle next to a phone. They still wear birthday hats. Boyd holds an ornately decorated CAKE.

It reads:

"Happy Birthday Napoleon!"

Verrier speaks into the phone.

VERRIER

Thanks for the info, Cap. We'll check in later.

He hangs up, gives a big SIGH.

VERRIER (CONT'D)

Fuck, I just want to go home and drink!

BOYD

What'd he say?

VERRIER

Some dumb DEA fed, Agent Fletcher,
is working a similar tip on this
place. Reached out to Cap directly.

BOYD

D-E-A? Jesus.

VERRIER

We have no hard evidence, just
circumstantial pig shit from a god
damn college aged newbie, yet
somehow the feds are getting in on
this?

BOYD

It must've been a pretty good tip.
I hope he's willing to share
information.

VERRIER

Fletcher is a "she" by the way so
try not to cream your jeans when
she gets here.

BOYD

Oh my god. Let's go back inside.

They make their way back to the front entrance in silence.
Boyd eyes the cake.

BOYD (CONT'D)

By the way, who's *Napoleon*?

VERRIER

That's what I wanted to name my
son, but my vampire of a wife
wouldn't let me.

BOYD

Your son lucked out. He would've
gotten the shit kicked out of him
with a name like that.

VERRIER

Barnaby gets his ass kicked plenty,
thank you very much.

INT. VEHICLE - NIGHT

This vehicle's engine is deafening.

Speedometer's at 100 MPH.

The driver's hand grips the steering wheel. We follow the sinewy arm up to reveal a basic-as-you-can-get **DOLPHIN TATTOO**.

On the radio, a clunky jingle for Amy Pitt's PIZZA PIT.

"Pizza, pickles, wings, and pie. Great food and service that'll make you cry. Come by early, don't be late, we got the best Sicilian-style pizza, in the state..."

END ACT THREE

ACT FOUR**INT. DJ BOOTH**

DJ Bobby Perry lights a fresh CIGAR, talks between puffs.

BOBBY PERRY

Sorry to interrupt the fun but it's time for a very special High Rollers announcement. If you could please draw your attention to the center of the rink.

The lights dim.

RINK FLOOR

A lone SPOTLIGHT illuminates the center.

BOBBY PERRY (O.S.)

High Rollers is staffed by charming and hardworking individuals--much like Miss Tobi out there.

Tobi stands clutching a **HIGH ROLLER OF THE MONTH FRAME**, its front hidden.

RENTAL COUNTER - CONTINUOUS

Emmett finishes a transaction and focuses on the rink.

DJ BOOTH

Bobby Perry continues.

BOBBY PERRY

The good times at High Rollers don't just magically exist. Oh, no. It takes the determination of *certain* people-- certain STANDOUTS-- with a high-caliber work ethic and sparkling personalities to create such a magical atmosphere.

RENTAL COUNTER

Emmett eagerly looks on.

BOBBY PERRY (O.S.)

And these standouts do not go unnoticed by upper management. No, sir. They're held in the highest regard. Tonight, we once again take a moment to honor one of those very special individuals on our staff.

RINK FLOOR

Tobi spots Emmett watching intently. She holds back a smirk.

BOBBY PERRY (O.S.)

This person has been with us for years, garnering a reputation as a selfless, dependable employee with a positive attitude...

RENTAL COUNTER/PARTY ZONE

Emmett playfully waves the comment off as he leaves the counter and heads for the rink.

He pushes through a group of PARENTS.

EMMETT

Excuse me, this is me.

BOBBY PERRY (O.S.)

This charming young man demonstrates customer service, leadership, and teamwork skills...

Emmett SKATES faster now, past the snack bar and onto the--

RINK FLOOR

Tobi gives a full-on smile when she sees Emmett approach.

BOBBY PERRY (O.S.)

Without this man's contributions, High Rollers would not be what you know and love today. I think you would agree...

Emmett rolls toward her, holding back blushes.

DJ BOOTH

Bobby Perry EXHALES a cloud of smoke.

BOBBY PERRY
 So, without further ado, High
 Rollers' *High Roller of the Month*
 for July is...

A generic DRUM ROLL sound effect plays over the speakers.

RINK FLOOR

Emmett is just about to reach Tobi when...

BOBBY PERRY (O.S.)
 Howie Chase!

Emmett stops in his tracks.

BOBBY PERRY (O.S.) (CONT'D)
 Or as you folks know him, REUBEN
 THE ROLLER ROO!

Tobi holds up the frame to reveal a **PICTURE OF REUBEN THE ROLLER-ROO**. Emmett's jaw drops as onlookers CHEER.

Reuben the Roller-Roo STUMBLES onto the rink. Kids try to grab him, but he knocks their hands away.

Emmett watches him, in shock, as he clumsily rolls toward Tobi. She hands him the frame and he hoists it up over his head in triumph.

The **CROWD** chants:

CROWD
 Reuben! Reuben! Reuben!

Emmett can't believe it. He looks at Tobi who shrugs and gives him a shit-eating grin.

He rushes at Reuben, grabs one side of the frame, and tries to yank it away.

HOWIE
 Hey--Emmett? What are you doing?

EMMETT
 That's not yours!

HOWIE
 My photo is on it!

The crowd of onlookers are absolutely stunned.

TOBI
Emmett, stop!

EMMETT
(to Tobi)
This is bullshit and you know it!

Emmett and Howie play tug of war with the frame.

HOWIE
You've been employee of the month
every month for the last year!

EMMETT
And for good reason!

TOBI
Just let go Emmett!

HOWIE
Yeah! Let go!

EMMETT
Let go?! Let go?! Okay!

Emmett lets go. This sends Howie soaring backwards, head over heels, the frame smashing to the ground, his mask **FLYING** off.

The place is totally **SILENT**.

Emmett surveys around at the faces of kids and adults staring back at him in horror.

Howie lies on the floor, grunting in pain. A group of **KIDS** run over to see if he's okay.

KID 1
Are you okay, Mr. Roller Roo?

One of the kids looks up at Emmett, tears in his eyes.

KID 2
How could you, you meanie? You're a
meanie! A bully!

Emmett moves toward Howie to help until a nearby **SUBURBAN MOM** steps in front of him.

SUBURBAN MOM
What did that kangaroo ever do to
you, you soulless maggot?!

This ignites a rush of **BOOS** and **SHOUTS**.

KID 3
This guy sucks!

SUBURBAN MOM
He should be fired! Fire him! FIRE
HIM!

The crowd joins in the CHANTING.

CROWD
FIRE HIM! FIRE HIM! FIRE HIM!!

Emmett is horrified and slowly skates backwards, retreats from the crowd.

He looks to Tobi who stares back, seemingly just as shocked as him.

He finally turns and retreats from the rink as patrons pelt him with pieces of trash.

INT. MEN'S RESTROOM

Emmett sits quietly on the toilet in one of the stalls, head in his hands.

He stares at the whistle dangling from his neck. He RIPS IT OFF and flushes it down the toilet.

A LOUD SNORT from outside the stall startles him.

He peeks around the door to find Jack staring at himself in the mirror, entranced.

Emmett spots a razor blade, a rolled-up dollar bill and white residue on the sink counter.

Jack spies Emmett out of the corner of his eye.

JACK
Sorry about your loss, kid. I had you pegged for it, but things shook out differently.

EMMETT
Tobi was behind that, wasn't she?

JACK
Oh yeah, it was her idea to give it to Howie. She's a genius. She knew Howie got his ass beat up pretty bad today.

(MORE)

JACK (CONT'D)

It was the smart thing to do for his morale. She's got C-suite exec in her bones.

Emmett KICKS the trash can over.

JACK (CONT'D)

Hey whoa! Fucking settle! Settle!

EMMETT

I just...I was really looking--

JACK

Wait! I have an idea.

He turns to the sink, SNORTS a line off the porcelain.

JACK (CONT'D)

Yee-haww!!!

(beat)

What were you saying?

EMMETT

Uh...I was saying that I was really looking forward to being High Roller of the Month again.

Jack nods, then starts swaying his hips.

JACK

(singing)

"You can't always get what you want... but if you try sometimes...you might find...you get what you need!"

He smashes imaginary drums, bounces around.

JACK (CONT'D)

You ever hear that little ditty?

EMMETT

Are you okay?

JACK

Never better! I've *really* missed this. It's the best escape from this vicious cycle of life.

INT. DJ BOOTH

Bobby Perry drops a needle on a RECORD. We look down to it, spin with it.

JACK (V.O.)
 Every day, *every fucking day* we're
 all just spinning round and round
 on this hamster wheel of shit...

RINK FLOOR - CONTINUOUS

MATCH CUT high above the floor staring down. We spin with the people going around the rink.

JACK (V.O.)
 ...but then *something* allows us to
 break free and reach a higher
 plane...

INT. MEN'S RESTROOM

Jack SPINS around to face Emmett.

JACK
 And that something is drugs, baby!

He does a spot-on signature Elvis Presley DANCE MOVE.

JACK (CONT'D)
 FUCK! I feel incredible! You know
 how in the mornings you wake up and
 you're ready to fuck the day into
 submission, but then six o' clock
 rolls around and you want to die?

EMMETT
 No.

JACK
 Exactly! With this shit I don't
 feel like that! I feel like it's a
 new day every second and I'm so
 electrified I could murder the sun
 and no one would judge me. We could
 make SO MUCH FUCKING MONEY on this
 coke.

EMMETT
 I am terrified.

JACK
 Yeah, I am too, but it's okay...

Jack turns to the mirror.

JACK (CONT'D)
 ...because nothing really matters
 anyway. Especially since Armageddon
 already knows something's up.

EMMETT
 What?

JACK
 Oh yeah. Armageddon's coming.

INT. OFFICE - EARLIER

CLOSE ON an **ANALOG ANSWERING MACHINE** sitting on Jack's desk
 next to his PHONE and ROLODEX.

JACK (V.O.)
 His little errand boy, Santiago,
 left an unexpected message.

A finger hits PLAY.

JACK (V.O.)
 Wanted to check in to see what's
 going on up here. Heard some tittle-
 tattle and wanted to make sure
 "everything is straight."

The playback begins but the words are unintelligible.

JACK
 So, if Santiago knows something's
 going on, Armageddon certainly
 does.

INT. MEN'S RESTROOM

Emmett paces back and forth, angsty.

JACK
 What is it?

EMMETT
 Nothing.

JACK
 Really? 'Cause it looked like you
 were having a little aside there
 with yourself. Clue old Jacky in,
 huh?

EMMETT

Maybe you should call him back and apologize. Tell him you were trying something new and admit it was dumb. A simple mistake.

JACK

(laughs)

Okay...sure, simple...

(beat)

Couple years ago some dumbass named Top Hat Murphy made a "simple" mistake...

INT. STUDIO APARTMENT - NIGHT

Stacks of **GREEN CASH** and bricks of **BRIGHT WHITE COCAINE** litter the room.

JACK (V.O.)

He made a shitload of money by cutting Armageddon out of the equation.

In the corner, amidst the money and drugs and wearing a worn **TOP HAT**, sits **TOP HAT MURPHY**.

He laughs, tosses the cash playfully in the air, dances amongst the falling bills, swings a **BAMBOO CANE** around, tips his hat to no one.

TOP HAT MURPHY

How do ya do? How do ya do?

JACK (V.O.)

Thing is, no one cuts Armageddon out and gets away with it.

Murphy stops laughing, his face slackens and he peers over his shoulder.

A dark silhouetted **FIGURE** steps from the shadows.

JACK (V.O.)

You cut Armageddon and Armageddon cuts you...

The Figure reveals a **BIG ASS KNIFE** and RUNS toward Murphy. He lets out a helpless scream.

The Figure knocks Murphy to the ground and starts hacking away at his groin.

JACK (V.O.)

Armageddon chopped Top Hat Murphy's dick clean off. He's now called No Dick Murphy and works at Hardee's in Two Harbors. I saw him there once. Talked to him. Nice guy all things considered.

A pool of blood creeps across the floor as NO DICK MURPHY wails in pain.

The Figure vanishes back into the shadows.

INT. MEN'S RESTROOM - REAL TIME

Jack is now sitting in the stall, snorts a bump off his hand.

JACK

Armageddon...more like ARMA-GED-YA-DICK.

Emmett shudders at the disturbing image.

EMMETT

It didn't work out for Top Hat Murphy so...why did you think it was going to work out for you?

JACK

Passion, baby! It got the best of me. I thought this new venture could work out for High Rollers in a big way. Thought we could've made boat loads of cash then buy that lobby fountain, a *Fiddler on the Roof* pinball machine or two--ALL THE CHOICE SHIT--but I guess...I guess I'm just another idiot duped by the allure of the American Dream...

EMMETT

Jack, tell the Canadians to take the coke back--

JACK

--it's too late! We're on Armageddon's radar--

EMMETT

--then at least ask them for help! This affects them too so they should--

JACK

--it doesn't matter anymore,
Emmett! The bed's been made and the
only thing left to do is shit in
it. Might as well enjoy the ride!

Jack snorts another small pile of coke off his hand as Emmett watches in horror.

EXT. ALLEY - NIGHT

Howie, in full Reuben the Roller-Roo attire, stands in the alley next to some dumpsters.

TEENAGERS and **ADULTS** surround him. They pathetically fight for the big kangaroo's attention just like the little kids inside.

Howie receives cash in exchange for bags of COKE and WEED that he pulls from his POUCH.

People finish their transactions and slowly clear out, revealing Verrier standing there watching.

HOWIE

(muffled)

What can I do you for, old man?

Verrier looks from side-to-side to ensure no one else is around. He steps closer.

VERRIER

You got anymore treats in that big old pouch of yours?

HOWIE

Need a little something for those aching joints, do you? Dr. Reuben's got just what you need.

Howie sticks his hand into his pouch and pulls out a bag of cocaine. He hands it to him.

VERRIER

Thank you.

HOWIE

Okay, pay up, pops.

Verrier sets a **POLICE BADGE** in his purple mitten.

HOWIE (CONT'D)

Interesting.

Howie THROWS the badge at Verrier and skates off down the alley as fast as he can.

Boyd suddenly steps out of the shadows, sticks her foot out and TRIPS Howie, sending him crashing to the ground.

EXT. PARKING LOT - NIGHT

Verrier and Boyd escort Howie by the arms towards an idling **BLACK PLYMOUTH GRAND FURY**.

Howie, sans mask, is relatively calm and doesn't struggle.

HOWIE

Fucking pigs. Kangaroo suit doesn't even belong to me.

Boyd opens a rear door.

HOWIE (CONT'D)

You got nothing.

VERRIER

We'll just have to see about that, won't we?

They SHOVE Howie into the backseat. Verrier crawls in with him. Boyd hops into the front passenger seat.

INT. GRAND FURY - CONTINUOUS

Howie squirms around. His large kangaroo suit makes it difficult for him to sit comfortably.

HOWIE

I'm not saying shit until my lawyer's present.

He checks his pouch.

HOWIE (CONT'D)

Can I at least get my smokes back, you assholes?

FEMALE VOICE (O.S.)

I got a smoke for you, Howie.

The DRIVER ignites a lighter, holds it up to a cigarette.

The flame faintly illuminates **KIM FLETCHER's** face. She appears to be in her later thirties or early forties. Stoic and straight-laced.

Perfectly dressed in a broad shouldered jacket and high-waisted pants-- the only flaw appearing to be a scar across her forehead.

She looks at Howie in the rearview mirror, holds the cigarette out to him. He ignores it.

KIM

Have it your way.

She takes an impressive drag. Howie's demeanor goes from cocksure to cock-less.

VERRIER

This is Agent Kim Fletcher with the DEA.

BOYD

Drug. Enforcement. Agency. The big dogs. Bark! Bark!

KIM

What's up, Howie? Looking for a free trip back to county?

HOWIE

I don't...I didn't...

BOYD

You fucked up real good.

VERRIER

Major violation of your parole.

KIM

Unless you tell me where this came from?

She holds up a bag of cocaine.

HOWIE

Oh shit...

Howie turns to look out the window. He dolefully observes the **HIGH ROLLERS SIGN** shining brightly in the night...

...FADE UP CREDITS.

THE END