

ACE
by
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Based on, THE BIG BIAZARRO

By
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DRAFT
11-19-09

FADE IN:

CLOSE ON a CIGARETTE, smoke curling as it's placed into an ASHTRAY. A HAND rises from the cigarette to a set of CARDS in the other hand. We stay on the hands as they thumb through five cards.

After a moment, the cards are set on the table, face down, a pile of MONEY is slid to the center.

A MAN'S VOICE (O.S.)

I call.

INT. BACK ROOM - NIGHT

WE PAN from HAND to HAND, some scarred, some diamond'd, ranging in tone from chalk to charcoal. We hear their voices...

VOICE 1 (O.S.)

I'm in.

Money slides to the center on the table.

VOICE 2 (O.S.)

I fold.

Lays cards down.

VOICE 3 (O.S.)

Call...

Money slides.

VOICE 4 (O.S.)

Out.

Cards down.

VOICE 5 (O.S.)

I'll see you.

More Money slides. Pause.

VOICE 3

Show 'em.

The cards hit the table. We PAN OVER - TWO PAIR, Jacks High. A STRAIGHT, King High. THREE OF A KIND, Queens. FULL HOUSE, Aces and Tens. We finally land on FOUR OF A KIND, Threes. WE HEAR the sound of a voice exploding.

VOICE

SHIT!!! SHIT!!!

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Arms reach across the table and pull in the huge pile of MONEY. We PAN up to the face of LESTER "LEFTY" WILSON, early 20's. He has the intensity of someone on a mission and the pain of someone who knows he may never accomplish it.

LEFTY

I love this game.

Lefty smiles at the table of Pimps, Hustlers and Big Ballers of all nationalities. No one smiles back. He is by far the youngest in this not so fine an establishment and not so friendly a crowd.

PLAYER 1

SHIT! That's some good playing, kid. I thought I had you.

LEFTY

Yeah, me too.

The Players start to rise.

PLAYER

That's it for me.

ANOTHER PLAYER

Yeah, I'm out.

JIMMY PALUSSO, 40s, smartly dressed in an Armani Suit, remains seated, looks Lefty in the eyes...

JIMMY

I guess it's you and me, Lefty.

PLAYER 1

Think I'll stick around for this..

DISSOLVE TO:

The POKER MOTIF - A SERIES of CLOSE UP SHOTS that move us through time -- Cards hitting the table. Money being pushed into the pot. Money being pulled out of the pot. Close ups of HANDS - LIPS - FINGERS - CIGARETTES - PERSPIRATION on BROWS - EYES - at times there will be F/X shots as we push into EYES - a SUBJECTIVE POV of a PLAYER'S cards and their visual interpretation of what the cards mean to them. A Full House may appear as a PILE OF DIAMONDS in one person's hand - a ROLLS ROYCE PHANTOM in someone else's. A bad hand or risky one might show the chamber of a gun SPINNING as in RUSSIAN ROULETTE or a SOUP LINE for a different player. This will NOT be animation, but PHOTO TYPE images shot in a look consistent with the look of the film. The images will vary, and will only be used to add spice to certain moments.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

Lefty and Jimmy play "head to head." The table is now surrounded by LOOKERS watching their every move. We can sense they've been playing awhile.

Lefty's got a six, eight, ten of hearts and a nine of spades on board. (Laying face up on the table.)

WE PUSH INTO LEFTY'S EYES - see his POV of an F/X SHOT of the card in his hand; It's an image of a SLOT MACHINE pouring out money with JACKPOT flashing.

Jimmy has a king and queen of diamonds, a three of diamonds and a seven of clubs on board, he thinks he has the better hand.

JIMMY

Five hundred.

LEFTY

I raise you five.

Jimmy looks down at Lefty's cards, then back up at Lefty.

WE PUSH INTO JIMMY'S EYES - see his POV of an F/X shot of the card in his hand. It's the image of a BASKETBALL PLAYER hanging on a basketball rim making a SLAM DUNK.

JIMMY

How much you got in front of you?

LEFTY

Eighteen hundred.

Jimmy writes on a piece of paper and tosses it on the pile of money.

JIMMY

I raise you eighteen hundred.

The room goes silent. Lefty looks at Jimmy. It's taken Lefty two months to raise this money. He focuses on Jimmy's eyes, looking deep, as if searching his soul.

LEFTY

I'll call.

Lefty pushes all of his money in... The two men stare each other down as they turn over their cards.

Jimmy has TWO KINGS, queen high. Lefty has the STRAIGHT!

Lefty wins. Jimmy is stunned. He sits shaking his head.

JIMMY

You're one of the best I've seen,
kid, and I've seen'em all.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (3)

LEFTY

Thanks. Means a lot coming from
you.

Jimmy takes a moment.

JIMMY

Look, kid... I need you to hold
that marker a few weeks.

LEFTY

That's a long time...

JIMMY

I'm good for it.

Jimmy stands to leave. Lefty reaches into his jacket.

LEFTY

Jimmy...

Jimmy stops, turns. Lefty pulls a torn PHOTO out of his
jacket, lays in on the table.

The photo is of a HANDSOME MAN, in a Tuxedo. He's
standing next to someone, but that part of the photo is
torn off. Jimmy looks at the photo, poker faced.

LEFTY (CONT'D)

You know him?

JIMMY

Can't say I do.

LEFTY

Why's everybody goin' silent on me
when I show this picture around?

JIMMY

I don't know what you're talking
about, kid.

Jimmy turns to walk away. Lefty grabs his arm, leans in,
speaks to him in a lowered voice.

LEFTY

Look Jimmy, I know you know more
than you're sayin'. Where can I
find him?

Lefty takes Jimmy's hand and places something into it...

LEFTY (CONT'D)

Here, take this marker back. Help
me out.

Jimmy looks down into his hand, back up at Lefty.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (4)

JIMMY

It's worth that much to you?

Lefty looks Jimmy in the eye, then tears up the marker.

EXT. METRO TRAIN - DAWN

The Commuter train rises from underground revealing
MANHATTAN in the distant background.

INT. METRO TRAIN - CONTINUOUS

Lefty sits staring out of the window, watching the dew
covered houses of Ferno, New York wiz by...

EXT. STREET - MORNING

Lefty walks down a block of modest Row Houses,
distinctive of up state New York.

INT. HOUSE - MORNING

Lefty enters, cautiously closing the door. He tiptoes
down the hall of the worn, but clean home.

VOICE (O.S.)

Where you been?

Lefty stops, sees his father, LESTER WILSON SR. sitting
at the kitchen table, a cup of coffee and a couple slices
of toast in front of him.

LEFTY

I was in the city.

FATHER

Down there playin' cards again?

Lefty hesitates...

LEFTY

Yes, sir.

Mr. Wilson looks at his son a long moment.

FATHER

What's your plan?

LEFTY

Excuse me?

FATHER

For life. Your plan?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Lefty shifts. Mr. Wilson takes a sip of his coffee, waits.

LEFTY

Be the best card player in the world.

FATHER

Twenty years I bust my ass... Building a life for you, so you didn't have to ask nobody for nothin' - so you could have a life better than the one I had - and that's your plan?

Lefty doesn't know how to respond.

FATHER (CONT'D)

Me and your Mother put away all our savings so you could go to college - be the first in the family... And you wanna run off and play cards. She'd roll over in her grave...

LEFTY

But, they say I got a gift, dad. I don't where it came from...I just know, everybody's tellin' me I'm not gonna get any better playing on this level. I wanna go...at least see what I got.

FATHER

Listen, it's a dead end road you're headed down, trust me... You don't wanna quit when you're winnin' and you don't wanna quit when you're losin'. I don't want you to have to hit rock bottom before you wake up... Don't want you to go through that.

Lefty finally, locks eyes with his Father.

LEFTY

I need to find out on my own.

Lefty turns to walk away. Mr. Wilson rises from the table...

FATHER

You step out there, you can forget about this place. I changin' the locks, everything. You wanna be on your own? You will be. I ain't investing in no gambler.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

CLOSE ON LEFTY - eyes filled with the pain of this decision, yet...

INT. AIRPLANE - DAY

...filled with wonder as he looks out the window at...

EXT. FRENCH RIVIERA - DAY

...the majesty of white sandy BEACHES, huge CHATEAUX intricately carved into the side of mountains. YACHTS dotting the rippling waves of the MEDITERRANEAN SEA.

MAN (O.C.)

Oh!!! You were so close...

INT. YACHT - CONTINUOUS

The handsome MAN we recognize from the Lefty's picture, sits at a large teak table on a beautifully appointed yacht. The Man is tall, wearing a beige suit tailored to perfection, his entire "vibe" speaks of wealth and good breeding. He pulls a huge pile of money in front of him.

MAN.

...you almost had me.

Over his shoulder, in the background, we see the mountains of the French Riviera. Also, seated at the table are several tanned JET SETTERS, who throw their cards on the table and rise.

JET SETTER

Ace, you lucked out this time.

ACE WHITE simply smiles...

ACE

I know. See you next week, Paul.

As the Group moves away from the table, an attractive young WOMAN with dark hair and a little too much makeup, sits across from Ace. She extends her hand.

WOMAN

I'm Angel. I'd love to spend some time with you.

ACE

Oh?

ANGEL

Yes, get to know you, maybe pick your brain.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Angel holds Ace's eyes as he gathers his money. He stands.

ACE
No thanks. Sounds painful.

Ace walks away.

EXT. MAJESTIC HOTEL - LOBBY - DAY

Lefty enters the cavernous lobby of the Majestic Hotel, one of the French Riviera's finest, looks around. He is totally out of his element, standing there wearing his hoodie, his jeans hanging low. A BELLMAN quickly takes his bags and guides him to the front desk.

DESK CLERK
Bon Jour, Monsieur. Est ce que je
peur vous aidez?

LEFTY
Sorry, I flunked French.

DESK CLERK
May I help you?

LEFTY
Yeah, I need a room.

DESK CLERK
Do you have a reservation?

Lefty shakes his head, no.

LEFTY
I'm meeting a friend of mine here
by the name of Ace White. He
checked in yet?

The Desk Clerk looks at the computer screen.

DESK CLERK
No, we do not have a Mr. White
registered.
(Beat)
I'm checking our rooms and we do
have a medium suite available for
three thousand two hundred euros.

LEFTY
How much is that in dollars?

DESK CLERK
That would be...

The Desk Clerk punches the numbers on a calculator.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

DESK CLERK (CONT'D)
Four Thousand Eight Hundred and
Five Dollars for the medium suite.

LEFTY
A NIGHT?!

The Desk Clerk registers Lefty's shock, smiles.

DESK CLERK
Perhaps, something less expensive?

LEFTY
Yeah, perhaps.

EXT. ONE STAR HOTEL - DAY

Lefty stands in front of a Hotel well away from the glamour of the Croisette. A sign hangs saying "35 EUROS par nuit".

INT. HOTEL ROOM - CONTINUING

The DESK CLERK, who doubles as a Bellman, drops Lefty's bags on the bed, then squeezes past Lefty, closing the door to his tiny room. Lefty crosses to a small table, with tourist brochures. He picks one up, thumbs through the pages of the high life in Cannes. He sits on the edge of the bed - thinks; so near and yet so far. Picks up another brochure, on the cover is a picture of an elegant building sitting on a peninsula overlooking a blue green harbor, we PUSH IN to read; The beautiful CASINO BARRIERRE DE CANNES.

Lefty moves over to his travel bag, pulls out a jacket, puts it on, takes a wad of cash out of his pants pocket, counts it into four separate piles on the bed, takes each pile and stuffs it into a different pocket. He then pulls out the photo of Ace and heads out the door...

INT. CASINO BARRIERRE - LATER

Lefty enters the Casino, looks around. This is where the beautiful people play. You won't see the tourists with the Hawaiian shirts here. If it weren't for the Slot Machines and Roulette Tables, he'd think he was in one of the dopest clubs in New York. The crowd is young, hip, rich. Trance music flows from the speakers. Lefty moves through the Casino, perusing the varying mix of royalty, jet setters, hustlers, wanna-bees and gonna-bees.

He goes to a CASHIER BOOTH, a good-looking young WOMAN sits behind the counter. Lefty puts down some cash.

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CONTINUED:

LEFTY
I'll take some chips,
Mademoiselle.

The WOMAN slides Lefty a rack of chips.

LEFTY (CONT'D)
Listen...

He reaches into his pocket, palms the photo of Ace, shows it to the Woman.

LEFTY (CONT'D)
...you seen this guy in here?

WOMAN
I'm sorry, no speak English.

Lefty pulls more cash, slides it toward her. She takes the money. Slides back chips worth one-tenth of the money he slid on the counter.

WOMAN (CONT'D)
He comes sometimes.

Lefty nods, moves off, checking the Casino, he passes every Slot Machine, every Black Jack, Roulette, and Poker table on the floor. No Ace.

At the far end of the Casino he sees an ornately painted elevator door with a SECURITY GUARD standing in front. He walks over to the elevator and notices there is no button. The Security Guard looks at Lefty.

SECURITY GUARD
Votre carte, Monsieur.

LEFTY
Excuse me?

SECURITY GUARD
Your members card.

He pulls out Ace's picture, shows it to the Guard.

LEFTY
Oh... I'm just meeting a friend of mine here. You seen him yet?

SECURITY GUARD
No, Monsieur.

Lefty slips some money into the Guard's hand, brings the picture closer to the Guard's face.

LEFTY
You sure you ain't seen him?

The Guard puts the money into his pocket.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

SECURITY GUARD

No.

CUT TO:

EXT. HOTEL - CANNES - DAY

Lefty shows the picture of Ace to the DOORMAN at a chic hotel. The Doorman shakes his head...no.

EXT. ANOTHER HOTEL - DAY

Lefty shows the VALET Ace's picture. The Valet shakes his head...no.

CUT TO:

A SERIES OF JUMP CUTS - DAYS PASSING - Lefty speaking to various PEOPLE who shake their heads. Some People point - others simply walk away.

FADE TO:

EXT. JETEE ALBERT EDOUARD - LATER

Lefty walks along the beach path. We can see the frustration on his face. He stops, takes a seat on a wall overlooking the white sand and the dozens of multicolored beach umbrellas lining the shore. He stares out at the Mediterranean contemplating his next move.

A YACHT docks at the foot of the Jetty. It is lavish in it's appointments, exemplifying the wealth of many who frequent the South of France.

A group of GUESTS come down the ramp of the Yacht, surrounded by uniformed CREW MEMBERS. The Group all turn and wave to a beautiful COUPLE still standing on deck.

The Crew Members escort the Group down the jetty as ONLOOKERS watch them pass. In the middle of the Group Lefty sees ACE walking purposefully next to a striking ASIAN WOMAN.

Lefty takes off, briskly walking down the long walkway toward Ace. As he approaches, he calls out.

LEFTY

Ace White?

Ace glances over, looks Lefty up and down.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

ACE

Who's asking?

LEFTY

They call me Lefty. I'm from New York.

ACE

Congratulations.

Ace continues walking, never slowing his pace. Lefty struggles to keep up...

LEFTY

Wait a minute.

Lefty tries to approach Ace. A Crew Member blocks him.

CREW MEMBER

Monsieur...

LEFTY

But, I been looking for you for a week. I came all the way here just to see you.

ACE

Nothing ventured, nothing gained.

The Group never slows as they move into a RESTAURANT, leaving Lefty standing there.

EXT. JETEE ALBERT EDOUARD - LATER

Lefty waits outside of the Restaurant for Ace to exit. He walks to the window looks in...

Lefty's P.O.V. - Ace is sitting at a large table surrounded by the beautiful people from the yacht. They are all laughing and drinking as Ace does card tricks.

Lefty stands there mesmerized, watching Ace handle the cards. We slowly push in closer on Ace, as he holds the raptured Crowd in the palm of his hands.

VOICE

LET GO OF MY FUCKING PURSE!

Lefty turns and sees ANGEL, desperately clinging to her PURSE as TWO TEENAGE BOYS try to pull it from her grasp.

Angel's a scrapper. She is kicking and spitting.

Lefty runs to her aid just as one of the Boys finally, wrestles the purse away.

The Boys turn and run, but only get a few steps before Lefty dives and tackles the Boy carrying the purse.

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CONTINUED:

Lefty punches the Boy, ripping the purse out of his hand with such force the Boy cries out and grabs his wrist. The second Boy seeing this, wants no part of Lefty and takes off, quickly followed by his friend.

Angel runs several steps after the Boys.

ANGEL
YOU PIECE OF SHIT!

She turns, comes back to Lefty, in a rush of emotion throws her arms around him. Speaks with a strong Brooklyn accent.

ANGEL (CONT'D)
Merci, merci, merci.

LEFTY
Don't worry about it.

Surprised, Angel steps back.

ANGEL
You're American!

LEFTY
Yeah.

Angel glances around at the small crowd of onlookers.

ANGEL
These Frenchies don't give a shit.
They coulda been killing me, they
woulda walked right by.
(Extending her hand)
I'm Angel.

LEFTY
Lefty.

ANGEL
Lefty? Well... thank you Lefty.
(Clutching her purse)
Everything I got is in here. Where
you from?

Lefty, torn, looks back at the restaurant...

LEFTY
New York.

ANGEL
Me too! You here on vacation?

LEFTY
Naw...

ANGEL
What do you do?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

LEFTY

Look, I gotta get goin'...

Lefty heads back toward the restaurant. Angel follows.

ANGEL

Oh, yeah, sure, sure... It's
just...you have no idea how much
you saved me.

Lefty looks through the Restaurant window again. He sees
Ace and Party getting up to leave. Lefty steps away from
the window and waits. Says to Angel...

LEFTY

Excuse me...

Angel awkwardly starts to back away. Ace and Group exit
the restaurant, still accompanied by the Crew Members.
Lefty drops in step...

ACE

You again?

LEFTY

Jimmy Palusso told me you were
here.

ACE

Jimmy Palusso?

LEFTY

Yeah, I beat him head to head.
Said if I mentioned his name,
you'd take care of me.

Ace hesitates.

ACE

How do I know you're who you say
you are?

LEFTY

I can prove who I am.

ACE

What's the password?

LEFTY

The password?

ACE

If you beat Jimmy he would have
given you the password.

LEFTY

What password? I don't remember
Jimmy giving me a password?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (3)

Ace and Group arrive at the Yacht. Ace pauses...

ACE
You came all the way from New York
and you forgot the password.
(then)
If you remember it, look me up.

Ace turns, boards the Yacht. The Crew Members raise the ramp as the last person steps on deck.

CLOSE ON LEFTY muttering...

LEFTY
Password...?

ANGEL
He's lying...

Lefty turns, Angel is standing behind him.

ANGEL (CONT'D)
...there ain't no password. What
are you gonna do?

LEFTY
What?

GIRL
What are you doing now?

Lefty's attention is split, thoughts still with Ace.

LEFTY
Why?

Angel grabs Lefty by the hand.

ANGEL
Come on, I'll buy you lunch.

Lefty resist, but Angel pulls him along anyway.

ANGEL (CONT'D)
Relax. You saved my ass back
there. Let me do some'em for you.

Angel guides him down the strip, as he racks his brain trying to remember if anyone had given him a password.

ANGEL (CONT'D)
I heard you talk about beating
somebody back there. What do you
do for a living?

Lefty doesn't answer...

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (4)

ANGEL (CONT'D)

Come on! What do you think, I'm a
cop? What do you do?

Lefty hesitates.

LEFTY

Play cards.

ANGEL

Really? You don't look like a
card player.

LEFTY

How would you know?

ANGEL

I know'em all.

Lefty pauses.

LEFTY

What do you do?

Angel smiles slightly.

ANGEL

This and that.

Lefty takes her in a moment...

LEFTY

You know the guy I was talking to?

ANGEL

Ace White? Everybody knows him.

LEFTY

Can you get me next to him?

ANGEL

Why you wanna do that?

LEFTY

You ask a lotta questions.

Angel looks at Lefty a long moment.

ANGEL

I'll see what I can do.

LEFTY

I appreciate that.

ANGEL

I owe you. You ask me to do
something, I'm gonna do it if I
can.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (5)

There is a sincerity in her statement that disarms Lefty. They look at each other, a fleeting, but palpable moment of intimacy. They arrive at a chic sidewalk cafe.

EXT. SIDEWALK CAFE - CONTINUOUS

As they approach the HOST.

ANGEL
I'm starving.

Lefty stops.

LEFTY
Listen, I don't have much of an
appetite right now, maybe another
time, alright?

Angel's hungry, doesn't feel like pushing anymore.

ANGEL
Fine, meet me at the Casino at ten
tonight - by the front bar. I'll
see if I can set something up.

INT. CASINO - LATER THAT NIGHT

Lefty enters the Casino, heads for the bar, looks around, doesn't see Angel, takes a seat.

BARTENDER approaches.

BARTENDER
Quel-que-chose de boire, Monsieur?

LEFTY
What time is it?

The Bartender looks at his watch.

BARTENDER
Ten-twenty. Something to drink?

LEFTY
Did you see a good looking dark
haired woman waiting here the last
twenty minutes?

BARTENDER
They all look like that... Your
drink?

LEFTY
Oh...um...slow gin fizz.

The Bartender moves away to make the drink. Lefty scans the Casino for signs of Angel.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

His attention is drawn to the sound of cheering at a distant table. He rises to get a better look...

HE SEES - Ace White standing at the head of the table blowing on a pair of dice. Lefty steps from the stool and moves toward Ace. From Lefty's POV we can see Ace fling the dice on the table, quickly followed by both of his arms raising high into the air. He's obviously on a roll. Lefty moves up to the table, slides into the crowd to get a better look.

Ace has the crowd mesmerized. There are enormous stacks of chips positioned around the inside of the table.

Ace picks up the dice again, rubs them between his hands.

ACE

Let it ride.

The table MAN repeats the bet.

TABLEMAN

It's double or nothing. Place your bets.

The bets hit the table and Ace lets the dice fly.

TABLEMAN (CONT'D)

Eleven. A winner!

The Table Man pays the bets around the table.

Ace picks up the dice again. Lefty notices that he rubs the dice the exact same number of times before he says...

ACE

Let it ride.

Looking at the amount of chips in front of Ace, he knows there is a good amount of money at stake with each pass.

TABLEMAN

It's double or nothing. Place your bets.

Lefty places a stack of chips on the table.

LEFTY

I'm betting with the roller.

The Tableman takes bets around the table. Ace rolls...

TABLEMAN

Six. Six is the point. Place your bets.

Ace slides another stack of chips into the fray.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

ACE
The "hard" way.

TABLEMAN
Five thousand the "hard" way.
Place your bets.

Lefty hesitates a moment - then places all of his chips
on the table. Ace rolls...

TABLEMAN (CONT'D)
Nine.

He slides the dice back to Ace. Ace does his ritual.

ACE
Let it ride...
(to the dice)
Come on, baby. Come on.

Ace rolls again.

TABLEMAN
Five.

ACE
(to dice)
Double trey... double trey.

Ace - ritual - rolls.

TABLEMAN
Eleven.

Lefty is beginning to get fidgety. All his money riding
on this.

The crowd cheers Ace on... Ace - ritual - rolls. Dice
stop. It's TWO THREES!

TABLEMAN (CONT'D)
A winner. Six. The hard way.

The crowd around the table explodes with cheers.

ACE
Let it ride...

TABLEMAN
It's double or nothing to the man.
Place your bets.

The Tableman looks from person to person taking bets.

Lefty pulls all of his chips off of the table.

LEFTY
I pass.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (3)

Ace - ritual - rolls.

TABLEMAN

Snake eyes.

The crowd moans. Ace has just lost ten thousand dollars.

TABLEMAN (CONT'D)

Next player.

Ace moves away from the table, grabs a scotch off a passing WAITRESS'S tray, downs it as he walks.

Lefty falls in stride next to him.

LEFTY

Excuse me, Ace...

ACE

You remember the password, yet?

LEFTY

No, but if you call Jimmy...

Ace grabs another drink off a different passing Waitress's tray, downs it without slowing his stride.

ACE

Why'd you pull your bet back there? I was on a roll.

Lefty hesitates.

LEFTY

I knew you were gonna crap out.

ACE

You should have told me.

A look of confusion comes to Lefty's face before he realizes Ace is not serious.

LEFTY

Ace, if you take me under your wing, I promise you won't regret it.

Another Waitress passes and Ace grabs a third drink as they approach the Ornate Elevator Door Lefty stopped at earlier.

ACE

Bonsoir Henri.

HENRI

I sorry Monsieur White. But, there seems to be a problem with your account. I can not allow you to enter at this moment.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (4)

ACE

Can you get Patrice on the phone,
please?

Henri pulls out his cell, dials. Ace turns to Lefty...

ACE (CONT'D)

How much money do you have?

LEFTY

Maybe three grand.

Holds out his hand.

ACE

Give it to me.

Lefty reaches into his inside jacket pockets, pulls a
roll out of each one, hands it to Ace.

HENRI

Monsieur White. I have Monsieur
Cateax.

Henri hands Ace the phone. Ace moves off to the side,
speaks in hushed tones, then turns and hands the phone
back to Henri. Henri listens a moment, swipes a Key Card
opening the elevator doors. Nods to Ace...

HENRI (CONT'D)

Monsieur White.

Ace steps in to the elevator. The Security Guard,
extends his arm as Lefty attempts to enter. Ace turns to
face Lefty...

ACE

What's your number?

LEFTY

What?

ACE

Your mobile number?

The doors of the elevator start to close. Lefty says his
number as quickly as he can.....

LEFTY

917-522-3434

...almost pressing his face between the opening as the
doors slide shut. His voice raising as he stands there,
not knowing if Ace heard the last couple of numbers.

LEFTY (CONT'D)

Hey!!! HEY!!!

The SECURITY GUARD steps up to Lefty.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (5)

SECURITY GUARD

Monsieur...

The Guard gently takes Lefty's arm. Lefty snatches his arm away. The Guard is about to give Lefty a warning, when Angel slides her arm under Lefty's.

ANGEL

So, you found Ace...

LEFTY

He just walked with my money.

Angel gently guides Lefty away from the Security guard.

ANGEL

You'll get it back. Come, let's play some roulette. I'm feeling lucky tonight.

He resists.

LEFTY

I'm gonna wait for Ace.

ANGEL

You're gonna stand by the elevator all night? You'll look like a "mark." You want that?

Lefty pauses, he doesn't.

ANGEL (CONT'D)

Come on...

She pulls Lefty down the aisle toward the tables.

CUT TO:

CLOSE ON SPINNING ROULETTE WHEEL the numbers on the wheel slowly creep to a stop. Off camera we hear a moan...

We PAN up to Angel's face - she's lost.

TABLEMAN

(in French)

Fifteen. The winner is fifteen...

A SERIES OF JUMP CUTS - The wheel spins. Angel moans - she's lost again. Lefty stands back, watching Angel lose several times in a row.

TABLEMAN (CONT'D)

...Eleven. The winner is eleven... Twenty-one is the winner... Seventeen is the winner...

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (6)

Finally, Lefty pulls Angel away from the table, whispers in her ear. The Game continues in the background.

LEFTY

I thought you knew how to play?

ANGEL

I ain't professional, but I win on my lucky nights.

LEFTY

Tonight obviously ain't one of 'em.

(beat)

The table is running a sequence, bet double digits, odd to thirty-three.

ANGEL

What are you talking about?

LEFTY

Watch the table carefully and keep track of the numbers as they fall. If the table is running a sequence, you can win, if not, get out. Right now the table is running odd numbers between eleven and thirty-three. Bet those...

Angel gives Lefty an "if you say so look," steps back to the table, places her bet.

A SERIES OF CUTS -

Angel starting to win.

Angel placing more bets.

Angel jumping up and down.

Angel hugging Lefty.

Angel placing more bets.

Angel raking in chips.

TABLEMAN

Twenty seven is the winner...
Fifteen is the winner... twenty
three is the winner...

Lefty splits his attention between Angel at the roulette table and the elevator door, keeping an eye out for Ace. The elevator door opens, Lefty's eyes are riveted to the shadow standing in the elevator. The MAN steps out - it's not Ace.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (7)

Lefty brings his attention back to Angel's table. Her good fortune is starting to turn. She loses three in a row. Lefty comes over to the table.

LEFTY

The sequence is dead. Stop.

Angel reluctantly picks up a healthy pile of chips, drops them into her purse. Lefty gently guides her away from the table. As they approach the line for the Cashier, Angel throws her arms around Lefty...

ANGEL

We made a killin'! Let's go somewhere - celebrate.

LEFTY

I'm gonna wait for Ace.

ANGEL

Don't worry about, Ace. I'll have somebody call me when he leaves.

EXT. BOULEVARD CROISSETTE - NIGHT

Lefty and Angel walk down the Croisette.

LEFTY

How much you win?

ANGEL

Close to five grand.

Lefty is impressed. Up ahead Angel points to a mid-star Hotel called the Splendid.

ANGEL (CONT'D)

I wanna stop by my place first, drop some of this money off.

INT. ANGEL'S HOTEL ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Lefty and Angel enter her basement suite. She has taken great care to make it not feel like a hotel room. She's placed silk scarves over the lamp shades, a middle eastern bed spread is draped over the bed, the room is very feminine without being dainty.

LEFTY

How long you been here?

ANGEL

Long enough.

Angel picks up the phone and hits a button.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

ANGEL (CONT'D)

A bottle of champagne, s'il vous
plait... Oui, that one, bye.

She plops down on the bed, takes the money out of her
purse, starts counting, laying it in two piles. As she
counts, Lefty looks at the photos on the dresser.

PICTURES of Angel as a young girl on a horse; Angel as a
toddler being held in the air by her mother, laughing
next to her mother is another toddler, arms in the air,
waiting for her turn to be picked up; Angel in a school
uniform standing next to a little girl in matching
uniform.

LEFTY

Who's this?

ANGEL

My twin sister.

LEFTY

She back in New York?

ANGEL

No, she died.

LEFTY

I'm sorry. I didn't...

ANGEL

No, it's okay. She and my mother
got killed in a car accident.

An awkward moment...

ANGEL (CONT'D)

Enough of that.

Angel motions for Lefty to sit on the bed.

ANGEL (CONT'D)

I want you to teach me how to play
cards...

Lefty smiles.

LEFTY

There're a lotta card games.

ANGEL

What's your game?

LEFTY

Poker's my "home game" and five
hundred rummy is my "road game."

ANGEL

What's all that mean?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

LEFTY

I guess it means I can get rich playing poker, but if I had to I could make a living playing five hundred rummy.

ANGEL

Which do you like best?

LEFTY

Poker.

ANGEL

Then teach me poker.

LEFTY

It's not that simple.

ANGEL

Come on. It'll be good karma. You want Ace to teach you, right? Do for others what you'd like somebody to do for you.

Lefty looks at Angel. She flashes her irresistible smile and shrugs. Lefty takes a long pause.

LEFTY

What do you wanna know.

ANGEL

The do's and don't's.

LEFTY

Poker is feel. How you feel when you're playing tells you a lot. If you're not feelin' great - not feelin' in the moment - don't play. If you are - do.

Angel goes over to her dresser and pulls out a deck of cards. She crosses back and hands the deck to Lefty.

ANGEL

Tell me some of your card secrets.

LEFTY

I don't give up secrets, but I'll give you a little some'em I do just to keep things interesting.

ANGEL

Okay...

LEFTY

You kinda know the game, right?

ANGEL

Yeah, kinda.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (3)

Lefty fingers through the deck with incredible speed and agility, pulling out each card he's talking about and placing it on the bed.

LEFTY

An Ace is the best card you can get. Then it's King, Queen, Jack, Ten, Nine, Eight...down to One, usually. Then you've got One of a Kind, One Pair, Two Pair, etc... You following?

ANGEL

Yeah.

LEFTY

When ever I have an Ace face up, I play the hand, no matter what. It's the most feared card in the deck 'cause it's got a lot of potential... And usually, your opponent will give you the benefit of the doubt, 'cause you may have another one or more in your hand. But, most of the time, you don't.

There is a knock on the door. Angel hops up, cracks the door and takes the bottle and tray from an extended arm. She crosses back, setting the tray on the bed.

She takes the Champagne, pops the cork, pores Lefty and herself a glass...

LEFTY (CONT'D)

We'll finish the lesson later.

She raises her glass.

ANGEL

To my knight in shining armor.

They toast. She turns up her glass. Lefty turns up his.

She picks up one of the piles of cash laying on the bed and hands it to Lefty.

ANGEL (CONT'D)

Fifty-fifty.

LEFTY

Naw, I can't take that?

ANGEL

Take it. You have no idea how much you've done for me.

Lefty doesn't take the money.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (4)

LEFTY

It was no big deal.

She looks him in the eyes.

ANGEL

It was to me.

Lefty smiles.

LEFTY

Thanks anyway.

Angel gently touches Lefty's face.

ANGEL

You've got a good heart, Lefty.
That's hard to find these days.

There's a world weariness in her eyes, tough yet vulnerable. She leans in and kisses Lefty. Some of the toughness dissolves. She pulls back. They look at each other a long moment. Lefty rolls the dice, leans in and kisses her back. The kiss grows with intensity. They reach for each other, falling back on the bed, knocking over the bottle of champagne. We hold on the champagne as the effervescent liquid slowly drains from the bottle.

FADE OUT.

SOUND OF A PHONE RINGING

FADE IN on a HAND coming out of the covers, answering.

ANGEL

Hello...

INT. HOTEL ROOM - MORNING

Angel, buried under the covers, sits up in bed, nudges Lefty.

ANGEL

Ace is leaving soon.

Lefty hops out of bed, throws on his clothes and bolts out the door.

INT. CASINO

Lefty quickly moves through the Casino, arrives at the elevator. A different SECURITY PERSON, stands guard.

Lefty approaches the Guard.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

LEFTY
Did Ace White leave yet?

GUARD
I don't know, Monsieur.

LEFTY
How long you been here?

The Guard lifts his hand.

GUARD
Step away, please.

As Lefty steps back the elevator door opens and out steps Ace. Ace looks at Lefty and smiles...

ACE
You've been here the whole time?

Lefty realizes he's standing in the same spot Ace left him - plays it...

LEFTY
Yeah.

ACE
You're lying.

Ace starts walking. Lefty follows.

LEFTY
How do you know?

ACE
You smell like a woman and your shirt is buttoned wrong.

Lefty looks down at his shirt. It's true.

ACE (CONT'D)
Don't lie to me, kid. It pisses me off.

LEFTY
Sorry.
(beat)
How was the game?

ACE
I lost.

LEFTY
How much?

ACE
All of it?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

Lefty stops, bends over, like he just got hit in the gut.
Ace stops, turns back...

ACE (CONT'D)
First rule in this game. You
can't be afraid to lose. Second
rule; You're going to lose,
nobody wins everyday. Third rule;
It's what you do after you lose,
that sets up the win.

Lefty looks up at Ace.

LEFTY
That was all the money I had.

Ace holds Lefty's gaze...

ACE
Fourth rule; Never give up all
you've got. I don't care who's
asking.

Ace turns and walks away.

ACE (CONT'D)
You're not ready for this life.
Go home.

LEFTY
I got no money to go home.

ACE
Where there's a will, there's a
way, kid. Where there's a will,
there's a way.

INT. THE SPLENDID HOTEL - NIGHT

Angel enters her room, turns on the light, she jumps...

ANGEL
You scared the shit outta me.

Sitting on the bed in the dark is Lefty. He looks up at
Angel, but doesn't move. Angel crosses to him.

ANGEL (CONT'D)
You see Ace?

Lefty nods.

ANGEL (CONT'D)
You get the money?

Lefty shakes his head.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Angel sits on the bed next to Lefty, puts a hand on Lefty's back. They sit in silence. He turns to Angel.

LEFTY

I got nothing.

Angel looks deep into Lefty's eyes...

ANGEL

That's not true...

She leans in, kisses him. He responds, slowly. Then, suddenly, they tear at each others clothes as if it's their last moment on earth. Two young lovers consumed by passion, devourer each other, the silhouette of their bodies entwine. Lefty whispers...

LEFTY

Angel...

ANGEL

Lefty...

FADE OUT:

EXT. STREETS OF CANNES - DAY

Lefty and Angel walk hand and hand.

Lefty and Angel are at an ice cream cart sharing a cone.

Angel punching Lefty's shoulders as he makes a joke.

Lefty and Angel waiting outside a restaurant... ACE WHITE exits. Lefty tries to talk, Ace keeps walking.

EXT. JETEE ALBERT EDOUARD - ANOTHER DAY

Lefty and Angel sit, feet dangling over a wall that overlooks the beach. Lefty looks up...

LEFTY

Here he comes.

Ace White is walking down the Jetee, having just stepped off of a Yacht that pulls away in the background.

Lefty runs up...

LEFTY (CONT'D)

Ace.

Ace keeps walking.

ACE

The answer's no.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Ace never slows his pace, reaches the end of the Jetee, climbs into a waiting taxi, drives away.

INT. CASINO - DAY/NIGHT

A SERIES OF SHOTS - everywhere Ace goes Lefty is standing there...

ACE IS AT THE DICE TABLE, he's losing - looks up LEFTY IS STANDING THERE, WATCHING.

ACE IS AT THE BLACK JACK TABLE - losing badly - looks up - LEFTY IS STANDING THERE, WATCHING.

ACE IS AT THE BACCARAT TABLE - losing again - looks up - LEFTY IS STANDING THERE, WATCHING. Lefty smiles, waves..

Ace stands, walks over to Lefty.

ACE
You're stepping on my luck. Get
the hell out of here.

Lefty doesn't move.

LEFTY
Not 'till you watch me play.

Ace grabs Lefty by the shirt, pulls him nose to nose.

ACE
You giving me ultimatums? Nobody
gives me ultimatums!

Lefty thinks Ace may be over reacting, tries to make light of it...

LEFTY
No, no... I was just... Look, Ace
I'll do anything...

Ace shoves Lefty off...

ACE
Stay away from me.

Ace goes back to the Baccarat table, sits. The DEALER is explaining the game to an OLDER BRITISH COUPLE.

DEALER
In Baccarat the winner is the
player who holds two or three
cards totaling closest to nine...

As Ace waits, Lefty takes the seat next to him and places a few chips on the table.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Ace looks at Lefty. This kid's got balls. The Dealer finishes the rules, deals.

QUICK CUTS -- of Lefty showing a virtuosic display of card savvy.

We PUSH SLOWLY IN ON ACE'S FACE absorbing Lefty's ability.

BACK TO LEFTY - He smiles pointedly at Ace, stands, picks up his chips and walks away.

INT. ANGEL'S HOTEL ROOM - NIGHT

Angel sits cross legged on the bed, a deck of cards spread out in front. She looks up when she hears keys rattling in the door. The handle turns...

Lefty enters, tosses his keys and personals on the dresser. Angel hops off the bed, jumps into his arms.

ANGEL

How'd it go?

LEFTY

Not well...

(beat)

Look Angel, I think I'm gonna head back to New York. No point stickin' around.

ANGEL

Come on...we're just gettin' started.

LEFTY

I came here for one reason.

Angel takes a long pause.

ANGEL

Maybe I should head back too.

LEFTY

Don't do it for me.

ANGEL

This place's pretty much dried out for me, anyway. Maybe we could travel together. Hit a few casinos. A little roulette, some cards, a couple scams. We'd make a good team.

LEFTY

I'm a card player.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

ANGEL

You're a card player with no bank,
Lefty. Let me help you.

This time Lefty takes a long pause, really looks at
Angel, the fragile glimmer of hope in her eyes. He nods.

SMASH CUT TO:

ACE WHITE

Struggling with TWO LARGE MEN, who have him by the arms.

ACE

Get your hands off me!

INT. MAJESTIC HOTEL - LOBBY - NIGHT

Ace is being escorted out of the hotel lobby by two well
dressed Security Guards. Ace has a suitcase in each
hand. As they arrive at the swinging glass doors the
HOTEL MANAGER approaches...

HOTEL MANAGER

Take his luggage.

The Two Men reach for Ace's suitcases - Ace resists.

The Men forcefully relieve Ace of his luggage.

HOTEL MANAGER (CONT'D)

I'm afraid we will have to retain
your belongings until you have
cleared your account, Mr. White.

Ace loses it...

ACE

I need my things! You're going to
pull this shit after all the money
I've spent here...

HOTEL MANAGER

We understand, Mr. White, but we
have no choice.

ACE

(grand performance)
You have no idea the damage you're
doing!

Ace makes a quick move to grab his suitcases. The
Security Guards block his path.

Ace makes another quick move to go around the Guards -
they're faster - they block him again.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Ace steps back - looks around - the entire lobby of PEOPLE are watching.

Ace covers, straightens his jacket and tie, then moves for the door...

ACE (CONT'D)
If you will excuse me.

The Guards look at the Hotel Manager. The Manager nods. The Guards step aside. Ace walks out.

INT. THE HOTEL ROBERT - NIGHT

Ace enters the tiny lobby of a TWO STAR HOTEL. He has a small paper bag under his arm. Behind the front desk sits an older DESK CLERK smoking a cigarette. The Man looks up as Ace walks up to the desk.

DESK CLERK
Welcome back, Monsieur White. It has been a long time.

ACE
I had a pretty good run this time, Michel. A pretty good run.

The Desk Clerk pulls a key from a grid of numbered slots behind the desk and hands it to Ace.

DESK CLERK
I can give you a couple of days, Monsieur White.

ACE
Merci, Michel.

Ace heads for the stairs.

INT. HOTEL ROOM - NIGHT

Ace enters his clean, but simple hotel room, sets the brown paper bag on the dresser. He takes off his suit, carefully hangs it on one of the bad wire hangers. Then takes off his shirt - checks the collar - spot cleans it - hangs it on a hanger as well. He meticulously buttons every button on his suit and shirt. He buffs his Italian shoes and neatly places them beneath the bed.

He moves to the dresser, pulls a bottle of scotch and a plastic cup out of the paper bag. He pours a drink, turns it up. Pours another, turns it up. Sits on the arm of the tiny sofa in his underwear and lights a cigarette. He takes a long slow drag, stares out a moment, then picks up the telephone and dials...

SOUND OF A PHONE RINGING

FADE IN on a HAND coming out of the covers grabbing a CELL PHONE, then disappearing back under the covers.

LEFTY

Hello...

INT. HOTEL ROOM - NIGHT

Lefty is buried under the covers, Angel next to him.

LEFTY

Hello?...

Lefty suddenly sits up in the bed.

LEFTY (CONT'D)

Ace?...

INT. ROBERT HOTEL - ACE'S ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Ace is sitting in his underwear, phone to his ear.

LEFTY

What time is it?

ACE

The early bird catches the worm.
Meet me in twenty minutes at Le
Newport Cafe and bring a deck of
cards.

Ace hangs up. Lefty jumps out of bed, starts dressing.

ANGEL

Where you goin'?

LEFTY

Ace wants me to meet him in twenty
minutes at Le Newport Cafe. You
know where it is?

Angel sits up in bed.

ANGEL

Yeah, but you'll never find it by
yourself. I'll come with you.

LEFTY

You don't have to.

ANGEL

No it's okay. We're partners.

INT. LE NEWPORT CAFE - NIGHT

The dark of night gives way to a crack of light on the horizon as Lefty and Angel enter the Cafe to find Ace sitting at a booth in the rear. They approach.

LEFTY
This is my friend. She showed me
how to get here.

Angel thrusts her hand toward Ace.

ANGEL
Angel.

Ace extends his hand and shakes, he remembers Angel from their earlier encounter...

ACE
Pleasure to meet you.

ANGEL
Like wise.

Ace motions for Lefty to sit. Lefty sits, turns to dismiss Angel...

LEFTY
Thanks for showing...

...but, Angel slides into the booth next to Lefty, inviting herself.

ANGEL
We're partners.

Ace looks from Angel over to Lefty, holding his gaze.

ACE
Are you now?

It's a bit of an awkward moment...

LEFTY
Well...

ANGEL
Yeah, since last night.

ACE
You a card player?

ANGEL
No, Lefty's gonna teach me, but we
won five grand playing roulette.

This gets Ace's interest.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

ACE
Really? Five big ones, huh?

ANGEL
Not bad for a first night, is it?

ACE
No, not bad at all.

Ace looks at Lefty.

ACE (CONT'D)
You bring the deck of cards.

Lefty pulls out the deck, extends them to Ace. Ace shakes his head.

ACE (CONT'D)
You keep them. Shuffle.

Lefty shuffles the deck.

ACE (CONT'D)
Cut'em.

Lefty cuts the deck.

ACE (CONT'D)
I'm going say a card and I want you to place it face up on the table.

LEFTY
Okay.

ACE
Nine of diamonds.

Lefty fingers the cards, turns up the NINE OF DIAMONDS.

ACE (CONT'D)
Good. Jack of Hearts.

Lefty pulls the Jack of Hearts out of the deck and turns it face up on the table.

ACE (CONT'D)
Faster. Three of Clubs.

Lefty fumbles, comes up with the Three of SPADES.

ACE (CONT'D)
Clubs. Now.

Lefty pulls the Four of Clubs.

ACE (CONT'D)
Wrong. Hand me the deck.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

Ace shuffles - cuts.

ACE (CONT'D)
Call'em.

LEFTY
Queen of Spades.

Ace flips over the Queen of Spades.

LEFTY (CONT'D)
Ace of Diamonds.

With lightning speed Ace flips over the card.

LEFTY (CONT'D)
Six of Hearts.

It hits the table.

LEFTY (CONT'D)
Jack of Hearts.

As fast as the card name is coming out of Lefty's mouth,
Ace is turning that card face up on the table.

LEFTY (CONT'D)
King of Clubs...Deuce of
Diamonds...Five of Clubs...Ten of
Spades...

ANGEL
How do you do that?!!!

Ace places the cards back in the deck.

ACE
You go with your very first
impulse.

He shuffles the deck again...

ACE (CONT'D)
When you shuffle the deck, in an
instant you see every card flash
before your eyes.

Ace demonstrates.

ACE (CONT'D)
Your sub-conscious mind registers
the exact order of every card.
But, your conscious mind gets in
the way, it doesn't know it's own
potential, so players count cards,
they play odds and percentages.
When on the deepest level, you
know what card is coming next.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (3)

Ace slides the cards over to Lefty.

ACE (CONT'D)

I want you to practice seeing the cards when you shuffle. One hand at a time at first, then both hands. And watch as other people shuffle, you'll always see at least a small corner of the card. Get to the point where you get it right ninety percent of the time. That other ten percent is what makes the game interesting. That's how you become the best.

Ace stands.

ACE (CONT'D)

I need to go to the can.

LEFTY

Yeah, me too. Be right back.

INT. BATHROOM - CONTINUOUS

Ace and Lefty enter the bathroom, cross to the urinals.

ACE

So that's your partner, huh?

LEFTY

Well, kinda...

They stand next to each other while taking a leak.

ACE

Did you split the roulette winnings?

LEFTY

She offered, but I didn't take it.

ACE

Never turn down money if the result is not going to be too painful.

(beat)

This is what I want you to do. Get your half of the money from Angel. Go buy yourself a pair of white linen pants and linen shirt. Meet me at noon on the jette off the Croisette. The same spot you approached me when we first met.

Ace steps away from the urinal...

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

LEFTY
So you're gonna work with me?

ACE
I didn't say that.

...he crosses to the sink, washes his hands.

ACE (CONT'D)
And don't bring the girl.

LEFTY
But...

ACE
No buts. She's not right for this crowd.

Ace and Lefty exit.

INT. CAFE DU MER - CONTINUOUS

Ace and Lefty head back to their booth. Angel is sitting there all smiles with the deck of cards in her hand.

ANGEL
Look at this.

She begins turning over the cards, one by one...

ANGEL (CONT'D)
Queen of Diamonds, Three of
Hearts, Seven of Spades.

She obviously pre-set the cards while Ace and Lefty were gone. She calls them all correctly. Angel is very pleased with herself, having a great time, thinks this is the funniest thing in the world. Ace simply gives Lefty a dry look; enough said.

EXT. CROISETTE - DAY

Ace stands at the end of the jette in front of a very large yacht, helicopter pad on top, Rolls Royce Phantom Convertible on lower deck, crazy. He's smoking a cigarette as he waits.

The ramp to the yacht is lowered and TWO CREW members stand on either side.

Lefty comes running up, breathless. He wears white linen pants and shirt. He looks at his watch.

LEFTY
I just made it.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

ACE

On time is late. Early is on time.

Ace hands Lefty a small brief case, turns and goes up the ramp to the yacht. Lefty follows.

As Ace boards the yacht he is greeted by a beautiful, tan, middle aged COUPLE. Their names are NADIA and RENE.

RENE

Ace, we are so happy you could find the time to come.

Rene's wife Nadia kisses Ace on both cheeks.

NADIA

Everyone is very excited

ACE

My pleasure.

Rene and Nadia escort Ace to a large stately room on the second level. Several PEOPLE sit around a large table, they all greet Ace warmly. Lefty is completely ignored. He walks a few feet behind Ace, carrying the case.

Rene motions to a YOUNG MAN, who approaches.

RENE

Meet my son, Jean-Paul.

Ace and Jean-Paul shake hands.

JEAN-PAUL

I've heard a great deal about you.

ACE

And I you...

Ace takes a seat at the table. The GUEST all squeeze in around him. He turns to Lefty, lifts a hand.

ACE (CONT'D)

The case, please.

Lefty hands Ace the case. Ace opens it, inside are several DECKS OF CARDS, DICE, BADMINTON PIECES, and various other ODDS and ENDS. Ace takes out two Decks, closes the case and hands it back to Lefty.

Lefty takes the case, then stands to the side watching as Ace cracks open the Decks of Cards.

A SERVER steps up to the table, wearing white linen pants and shirt. He carefully places drinks on the table for Ace and the others, ignoring Lefty. Lefty is starting to get a bit miffed, then he notices all the WORKERS/CREW MEMBERS are dressed like him.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

Ace spreads a deck across the table, takes the edge of the card on the end and lifts it until the entire deck turns over, face up. He motions to the group. One by one they mimic Ace, attempting to do the trick.

ACE (CONT'D)
If you place one hand at one end
and one at the other. You can
flip the cards over and back.

Ace demonstrates a couple of times, turns back to Lefty.

ACE (CONT'D)
The case...

Lefty shoots Ace a subtle look as he hands him the case.
Ace simply smiles.

ACE (CONT'D)
Thank you.

Ace takes out more Decks and passes them out.

ACE (CONT'D)
Now you all try. I'll be back.

Ace leaves the table, followed by Lefty.

EXT. YACHT - DECK - CONTINUOUS

Ace steps out on the deck, Lefty on his heels. Ace takes out a cigarette, leans on the rail, lights up.

LEFTY
All due respect, Ace. I thought I
was gonna play cards, not be your
hand maiden.

Ace smirks...

ACE
Go below to the galley, there's a
table, sit and wait, if anybody
asks, you're a member of my staff.
I'll be down later to get you.

Ace heads back. Lefty remains on the deck, looks out across the port, taking in the moment. He is looking at the other huge yachts docked at the port, when he catches a glimpse of someone who looks like ANGEL, wearing a white linen sun dress, standing on one of the decks. She is arguing with a white haired OLDER MAN. The Man places his arm around her waist and steers her away. Lefty waits for her to turn around to get a better look, but she and the Man disappear into the yacht.

INT. YACHT - ROOM

Ace is back at the table. Each person in the group now has money on the table in front of them. Ace turns over a card. It's the Jack of Hearts. A GUEST turns over a card, it's the King of Spades. The Group moans...

Ace picks up the money in front of each Person.

ACE

That was close, just two out of five, is all you need. Let's try it again. You want to play for low again this time?

Ace lays the deck of cards back on the table. Ace is working the Educational Hustle.

INT. YACHT - GALLEY

Lefty sits alone at a long table. This part of the galley is almost like the Worker's lounge. Servers grab trays of food from a counter behind him and move pass.

Lefty is sipping on an Orangina when some CREW MEMBERS take a seat at the table, they're on a break. Some have sandwiches, others just drinks. One Crew Member, his name is NICHOLAS, looks over at Lefty.

NICHOLAS

Where are you from?

LEFTY

New York.

NICHOLAS

Ah... American.

(then)

If you don't mind, we play cards during our lunch break. So we are going to need your seat.

Lefty nods, then stands.

LEFTY

No worries...

Another Crew Member turns to Lefty, his name is UVI.

UVI

We don't want to be impolite. You are welcome to sit, but if you sit, you have to play.

LEFTY

What are you playing?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

JEAN-PAUL (O.S.)

Poker.

Lefty turns around and up walks Jean-Paul, the son of the yacht owner, and TWO of his FRIENDS. They all sit.

Lefty looks around the table - Ace had it all figured out - he simply smiles...

LEFTY

I'll give it a try.

CUT TO:

ACE

Oh!!! You were so close.

INT. YACHT - ROOM - LATER

Ace is raking in money, sliding it into a huge pile in front of him. He and the entire Group are very close to being drunk. The Group at the table chants.

GROUP

One more! One more! One more!

Ace raises his hands, all smiles...

ACE

Okay, okay. We got time for one more...

EXT. JETEE ALBERT EDOUARD - DAY

Ace and Lefty walk briskly down the Jetee as the yacht pulls away. Lefty is bubbling with excitement.

LEFTY

Ace, that was dope! I cleaned them out.

ACE

I knew the yacht owner's son would be on board. He's a famous hot head, womanizing, brat. Fancies himself a poker player, likes to take the crew's money in these little games.

LEFTY

He never saw it coming.

ACE

How much you take him for?

LEFTY

Close to eighteen thousand!

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

ACE
Good, I'll take half.

Lefty pauses, counts out nine thousand, hands it to Ace.

ACE (CONT'D)
Now we're even, kid. You can go
back home.

LEFTY
I don't wanna go back. I wanna
study with you.

ACE
Go home. You're a good player.
You've already beaten Jimmy
Palusso, he's one of the best.
What do you need me for?

Lefty takes a moment...

LEFTY
I wanna win the poker world
series.

Ace pauses.

ACE
The tournament on TV.?

LEFTY
Yeah.

Ace laughs, then continues walking.

ACE
I'm sorry, but I can't help you.

LEFTY
Ace, please. I need the best, to
help me beat the best.

ACE
The best players in the world
aren't playing the "world series
of poker." You don't see them on
TV. They don't play Texas
Hold'em. They don't wear
sunglasses at the table.

LEFTY
What do you mean, those guys are
great.

ACE
Yeah they're good players, some
are even great players, but not
the best in the world.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

ACE (CONT'D)

In fact, the best players can't wait for the guy who wins the world series to play them, thinking he's arrived. 'Cause, that guy's the sucker at the table.

(beat)

Listen kid, get on a plane, go back to Manhattan.

LEFTY

I'm not from Manhattan.

ACE

You said you came from New York.

LEFTY

Yeah, but not from the city. I'm from Freno...

Ace stops.

ACE

Freno?

LEFTY

Yeah, you know it?

Ace takes a moment.

ACE

I've heard of it.

(beat)

What's your real name, kid?

LEFTY

Lester Wilson Jr., they started calling me Lefty when I was a kid.

Ace looks off, poker faced, but there's something in his eyes we see that Lefty can't... After a long moment he turns back to Lefty.

ACE

Get packed, meet me in the lobby of the Majestic in an hour.

LEFTY

So you'll take me on?

ACE

I didn't say that...

INT. ANGEL'S HOTEL ROOM - DAY

Lefty is packing his bags, when Angel walks in, wearing the white linen sun dress.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Lefty takes in the dress, thoughts rushing through his mind. Wounded, he continues packing.

ANGEL
Where you goin'?

LEFTY
London. Ace wants me to meet him
in an hour.

Angel tries to sound upbeat, but is clearly disappointed.

ANGEL
I guess that means we won't be
heading back to New York together,
going through with our plan.

Lefty stops packing, crosses over to Angel.

LEFTY
Look, I'm sorry, but this is my
shot.

Angel looks Lefty in the eyes.

ANGEL
I was hoping I was your shot.

Lefty smirks.

LEFTY
You'll have others.

Angel is stung. She sinks to the bed.

ANGEL
Lefty, why're you being like this?

LEFTY
Look, Angel, it's been great, but
I'm a poker player, not a hustler.

Angel has no response, just sits, eyes on Lefty, fighting the tears. Lefty touches her face.

LEFTY (CONT'D)
Take care of yourself.

Angel stares at Lefty, the tears finally creeping out...

ANGEL
You too.

Lefty exits, closes the door behind him.

INT. CORRIDOR - ANGEL'S HOTEL - CONTINUOUS

Lefty stands on the other side of Angel's door, rests his head against the wood. Emotions...

INT. MAJESTIC HOTEL - LOBBY - DAY

Ace walks briskly through the lobby carrying his confiscated bags. The Hotel Manager walks behind him.

HOTEL MANAGER
Thank you, Mr. White it's been our pleasure to serve you.

ACE
Fuck off, George.

As Ace exits, he tips the Doorman.

ACE (CONT'D)
See you soon, Louis.

EXT. AIRPLANE - DAY

Jumbo Jet races through frame.

ACE (O.S.) (CONT'D)
The game is called the Big Biazarro...

INT. AIRPLANE - CONTINUOUS

Ace and Lefty are seated next to each other. Ace has a scotch and milk in hand.

ACE
...it's a secret game where six of the best players in the world play "winner takes all." It's by invitation only.

LEFTY
This some secret society?

ACE
Yeah and no. You have to be a poker master to be invited.

LEFTY
A poker master?

ACE
It's a title given when one beats four other masters. There're only twenty-seven in the world.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

LEFTY
Sounds complicated. Have you
played it before?

Ace stares off a long moment, there's a heaviness there..

ACE
No...

He turns back to Lefty, as if he has just had some
insight, a glint in his eyes.

ACE (CONT'D)
...But, maybe it's time to shake
things up.

LEFTY
What do you mean?

ACE
Maybe you can.

LEFTY
Really?

ACE
We'll see.

LEFTY
Ace, thanks... thanks so much.
You won't regret this.

ACE
I said we'll see.
(beat)
You say goodbye to the girl?

LEFTY
Yeah, you were right about her.

ACE
What do you mean?

LEFTY
I don't know...just...your
impression of her...
(beat)
But, I liked her... I mean, I
liked her a lot.

ACE
Look kid, I'm going to be straight
with you. Angel had a lovely
personality, but if you're going
to live this kind of life, you
live it in style. You eat the
best foods, stay at the best
hotels, travel first class, and
date only ladies.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

ACE (CONT'D)
 You've got to establish yourself
 as a gentleman, or they won't
 allow you in the Biazarro no
 matter what you've got. It's just
 the way it is...

On Lefty's pained face...

EXT. HEATHROW AIRPORT - DAY

AN AERIAL SHOT - Jumbo Jets coming and going. London
 visible in the distance.

EXT. LONDON HOTEL - DAY/NIGHT

A VALET opens the rear door to a Mercedes sedan as Ace
 and Lefty step out and march through the revolving door
 of one of London's chicest hotels.

INVISIBLE CUT:

Same revolving door as Ace and Lefty step out, both
 wearing Tuxedos. Ace has the lead, quickly walking to
 the waiting Mercedes Sedan. The Valet opens the door...

EXT. LONDON STREETS - CONTINUING

The Mercedes races through streets of the West End.

EXT. LA MER - NIGHT

Ace and Lefty step out of the Mercedes in front of a huge
 countryside villa hidden, behind a grove of cypress
 trees. They walk up a white brick path, leading to the
 door of the gray stone mansion.

INT. LA MER - CONTINUOUS

Ace and Lefty step through the door. The house has large
 rooms with high-beamed ceilings. The decor is white on
 silver gray carpeting with black walnut walls.

ACE
 You like it?

LEFTY
 What's not to like?

They walk up a spiral staircase. On the wall hangs, Van
 Gogh, Cezanne, a Toulouse-Lautrec, and a Michelangelo.

LEFTY (CONT'D)
 Are these real?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

ACE

You bet your ass they're real.

Ace and Lefty move along the balcony, through a large Spanish-style door.

INT. LA MER - ROOM - CONTINUOUS

They enter the room and approach the bar.

ACE

Couple scotches and milk.

LEFTY

I don't drink scotch.

ACE

It's a good time to learn.

Ace hands Lefty a glass. Lefty sips, frowns.

LEFTY

How can you drink this? This is terrible.

Ace takes a sip of his scotch, turns his back to the bar and takes in the crowd. Something catches his interest. Lefty notices...

LEFTY (CONT'D)

What you lookin' at?

Ace doesn't answer just continues staring across the room. Lefty turns, peruses the crowd. Sitting at the Baccarat table, fingering a stack of five pound notes is a gorgeous NIGERIAN-LOOKING PRINCESS, dressed to love and gazing right at Lefty. Lefty smiles to himself, maybe she can take his mind off of Angel, looks over at Ace.

ACE

Forget it, kid, she's been staring at me since we got here.

Lefty looks back at The Princess, sure enough, her eyes are focused on a spot just to the right of him - Ace.

Lefty looks back at Ace. Ace gives him a little smile.

LEFTY

Come on Ace. What about that nice blond over there? Leave the sisters to me.

ACE

You like'em all. I like'em all.

Ace takes another sip of scotch, leans over and whispers.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

ACE (CONT'D)

You see that man over there...in
the dark blue tux.

Lefty looks. Sees a distinguished-looking MAN with
sharp, clear, piercing eyes.

LEFTY

I see him.

ACE

He's the reason we're here. His
name is Duxbury. He's a Poker
Master. Come, let's see what
you're made of...

Ace starts across the rose-colored room. Lefty walks a
half step behind, straightening his jacket, trying to
compose himself. Ace arrives at the table.

ACE (CONT'D)

Albert, may we sit?

Duxbury nods, while keeping his eyes fixed on Lefty.

DUXBURY

Good evening, Horace; how goes it?

ACE

I'd like to introduce you to the
young man I was telling you about,
Mr. Wilson.

LEFTY

Call me Lefty.

DUXBURY

I don't particularly like
nicknames, I have always preferred
proper ones, so I'm certain you
won't mind if I call you Mr.
Wilson.

LEFTY

Whatever suits your fancy.

Ace and Duxbury exchange a look.

DUXBURY

Horace tells us you're quite a
player...

The three men smile awkwardly at each other, then Lefty
looks directly at Duxbury.

LEFTY

You want to play Texas Hold'em
with me?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

DUXBURY

With you...or against you?

LEFTY

Call it anyway you want, but I'd love to sit down at the table with you tonight.

DUXBURY

We don't play Texas Hold'em. Five card stud is our game of choice.

LEFTY

Fine with me...

Ace notices that a number of people, have stopped what they were doing and are beginning to maneuver for seats around a small poker table in the opposite corner.

Duxbury stares coldly at Lefty for a few moments, rises without a word and walks across the room.

Ace smiles. Lefty gets up to follow Duxbury.

ACE

(calls out)

Lefty...

Ace rises from the table, crosses to Lefty, leans in...

ACE (CONT'D)

There's no sweat here. Just psych him out.

LEFTY

What do you mean?

ACE

Play with his head. He's a snob, a perfectionist. He thinks poker is an extreme art that should be played by gentlemen with manners and dignity. Shake him up a little. Within the first five hands, make a move, any move, but make him feel it. You can beat him, and when you do, you've taken your first poker master.

CLOSE ON THE FACES of the crowd of on-lookers, some sitting, some standing at a distance around the small poker table.

Ace and Lefty approach the table. Lefty takes a few seconds to capture the moment, his first Poker Master game. Finally, he sits.

DUXBURY

You can deal.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (3)

LEFTY

What are the stakes?

DUXBURY

Twenty-five thousand dollars.

Duxbury eyes Lefty closely, waiting for him to flinch. Lefty looks up at Ace. Ace nods.

DUXBURY (CONT'D)

Can you afford it?

LEFTY

Does a bear shit in the woods?

More than half of their audience laughs. Duxbury looks at Lefty as if he's said something very distasteful.

Lefty knows he's arrived, when the croupier hands him a stack of blue, red and white chips without first asking for some sort of collateral.

Lefty sits there in his smooth black tux, thousands in chips in front of him. He looks back over to Ace, a moment passes between them as Lefty's immense gratitude shines in his eyes.

Lefty breaks the deck. Duxbury watches closely as Lefty shuffles the cards. He looks up at Lefty.

Lefty stares back, then cocks his eyes while tilting his head and gives Duxbury a silly grin. He places the cards down in front of Duxbury.

LEFTY (CONT'D)

Your cut, Duxy.

Duxbury's face flushes red with anger.

DUXBURY

How dare you call me out of my name.

He snatches the deck from Lefty, shuffles it again, then tosses the deck back at Lefty.

DUXBURY (CONT'D)

Now that's the way you shuffle cards, ingrate!

LEFTY

That's cute, Duxy. Would you like for me to show you a trick?

Duxbury slams his fist on the table, upsetting the stacks of chips...

DUXBURY

NO!

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (4)

Lefty pauses, looks at Duxbury as if he's done something very distasteful.

LEFTY

(calmly)

All right, in that case, I will proceed to deal a game of five-card stud. A game in which I shall win, and you, shall lose.

Lefty begins to deal.

LEFTY (CONT'D)

You have a down card. I have a down card. You have a king of diamonds, I have a trey of spades.

(smiles)

It's your bet.

DUXBURY

You're not going to make it in this world, kid.

Lefty smiles.

LEFTY

But I'm already here, Duxy. I'm already here. As I said, it's your bet.

Duxbury throws in a thousand dollar chip. Lefty throws a thousand dollar chip in as well.

LEFTY (CONT'D)

I call.

Lefty deals Duxbury a six of clubs - himself a jack of hearts.

Duxbury throws in two thousand dollar chips.

Lefty scratches his head, stretches his back, giggles, yawns...then tosses in seven thousand dollar chips...

LEFTY (CONT'D)

I raise you.

The casino falls silent. Lefty deals.

LEFTY (CONT'D)

You now have a wonderful eight of diamonds to go with your impressive king of diamonds and your less than impressive six of clubs.

(then)

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (5)

LEFTY (CONT'D)

I now have a ten of diamonds to go
with my impressive jack of hearts
and my also less than impressive
trey of spades. It is still your
bet, Duxy.

Duxbury is fuming. His nostrils are enlarged and his
face is a blood red.

LEFTY (CONT'D)

Well, it looks as if we're down to
the wire...let's see, it looks
like your kings against my-

DUXBURY

(yelling)
Shut up!

LEFTY

Aww, someone lied to me. They
told me you were a gentleman.

DUXBURY

If you don't shut your mouth this
instant, I will withdraw from the
game.

LEFTY

Are you going to forfeit the game?

Duxbury just sits there staring at Lefty, finally he
looks back down at the cards, a revelation manifesting
behind his eyes, he shoves all of his chips into the pot.

LEFTY (CONT'D)

How much is there?

DUXBURY

It's exactly the same as you have
in front of you.

LEFTY

You tappin' me on the fourth card?

DUXBURY

What does it look like?

Lefty puts on a kid's sad face.

LEFTY

(baby voice)
That's not berry nice. You sure
you don't want to wait 'til the
fifth card?

DUXBURY

I'm sure. It's your bet.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (6)

LEFTY

Hmmmm, so it is, so it is... Let's see, you've got a king, an eight, and a six. I have a trey, a jack, and a ten.

Lefty breaks out into a loud laugh, throws his head back.

LEFTY (CONT'D)

Oh, I see. You've got a pair of kings, and you think I've got a pair of jacks, so you win, right? But what you don't know is that I do not have a pair of jacks, so...

Lefty now puts on a very sad face.

LEFTY (CONT'D)

...you win anyway.

DUXBURY

It's your bet...idiot!

LEFTY

Oh, well, you win some, lose some.

And Lefty pushes all of his chips into the pot.

This brings all sorts of "oohs" and "ahhs" from the audience.

Duxbury is stunned. He looks at Lefty as if he is completely insane. Lefty shrugs.

LEFTY (CONT'D)

It's only money.

DUXBURY

Put the deck down on the table.

LEFTY

Oh, of course.

Lefty places the deck on the table to his left.

LEFTY (CONT'D)

Anything else?

DUXBURY

Deal.

LEFTY

Yes sir.

Lefty takes the tips of his fingers, very meticulously he lifts the top card off the deck and flips it over to Duxbury's hand.

It is a deuce of hearts.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (7)

He then, very slowly and carefully lifts the next card and flips it over on his cards.

It is an ace of diamonds. Lefty smiles.

LEFTY (CONT'D)

Would you like to bet?

DUXBURY

We're tapped.

Lefty turns over his hole card. It's the ace of spades. Lefty WINS. Duxbury quickly buries his hand in the deck, raises his hate filled, skeptic eyes to Lefty.

In this moment Lefty feels some remorse for acting like an ass. He glances up at Ace, but Ace is hard to read. He looks back at Duxbury.

LEFTY

I'm sorry. Would you like to keep playing? I promise to keep my mouth shut.

DUXBURY

I don't think you can.

Lefty leans back in his chair and waits for Duxbury to make a decision. Duxbury stares at Lefty as he has done all night, then calmly shakes his head.

DUXBURY (CONT'D)

We'll meet again.

Duxbury leaves the table and as quickly, the audience moves away. A tall English GIRL sits in Duxbury's chair.

TALL GIRL

What are you going to do with all that money?

Lefty smiles, then simply shrugs at her.

TALL GIRL (CONT'D)

Given the chance, I could make you feel quite good.

LEFTY

I'm sure you could, but not tonight.

As she walks away, a croupier stacks Lefty's chips.

CROUPIER

Mr. White is waiting for you in the men's room.

INT. MEN'S ROOM - CONTINUING

As Lefty enters, Ace turns to the ATTENDANT.

ACE
Could you excuse us a moment.

Ace waits until the Attendant is gone, turns back to Lefty, fury in his eyes.

ACE (CONT'D)
We're through.

LEFTY
What?

ACE
Don't try to con me.

LEFTY
Wait a minute, Ace. What's up?

ACE
What's up? I'm out there trying
to get you a foot into this world
and you pull some shit like that!

LEFTY
Like what?

Ace looks Lefty directly in the eyes.

ACE
Do you really think I'm that
stupid?

Lefty lowers his eyes.

LEFTY
All right. What you wanna know?

ACE
All of it. Why, how and when.

LEFTY
Which do you wanna know first?

ACE
When?

LEFTY
When he threw me the deck face-up.
Remember, he tossed me the sealed
deck, I shuffled it, he took it
from me and threw it back face-up.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

ACE

And you picked up the deck,
stacked him kings and yourself
aces.

LEFTY

Well...yeah, I guess I did.

ACE

WHY!

LEFTY

Shhh, Ace, you want the whole
world to know about it? I wasn't
planning on doing it, but when he
threw that deck at me and said
'This is how you shuffle...' it
pissed me off and those kings and
aces were just lying there. So I
just picked them up and while he
was busy "mad dogging" me, I
shuffled in the stack. But Ace, I
swear, I don't usually cheat. I
know it's not cool in this kinda
game. It's just, he's so fuckin'
arrogant. I don't know, I'm sorry.

ACE

Bullshit! A Poker Master game,
your first Poker Master game and
you stack the deck!

LEFTY

Nobody knows.

ACE

I know!

LEFTY

But you just guessed. Tell the
truth, did you see me do it?

ACE

I didn't have to see you do it!
I know goddamn well that even a
rookie like you is not going to
bet thousands on an ace-high hand
when he knows he's facing kings!

LEFTY

I swear, I'll never cheat again.
I didn't wanna lose in front of
you and it be over...Please...

Ace takes a long breath, walks across the room.

ACE

You sonofabitch, if you ever-

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

LEFTY

I swear to God.

(then - smiles)

But, I beat a Poker Master.

INT. LONDON HOTEL - ROOM - NIGHT

A HAND picks up a ringing cell phone. We pan up to Ace, shirtless, pouring a glass of scotch and milk, trays of room service food in front of him. He walks to the terrace, overlooking the London lights. In the background, we see The Princess, sitting on the bed, her long legs visible through an open robe.

ACE

Yes?...Mr. Duxbury. To what do I owe this pleasure?...
Downstairs?...really?...I'll meet you in the lounge in five minutes.

INT. LONDON HOTEL - LOUNGE

Ace enters the lounge and sees Duxbury seated at a table with TWO very distinguished looking MEN, GEORGE PALMER DEEDS and HANK BOSWELL. They stand as Ace approaches. Ace shakes hands with the Men.

ACE

George, Hank, it's been awhile.

DUXBURY

Horace have a seat.

Ace does.

BOSWELL

Horace, Albert here has brought to our attention a young man whom you are sponsoring, with hopes of playing our circuit.

ACE

Yeah, what about him?

BOSWELL

Quite honestly, from what we've heard from Albert. He won't get another game here in London. We don't think he's...suitable.

ACE

What a crock. Who are you three the "suitable" commission?

Duxbury leans in, making eye contact with Ace.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

DUXBURY

Frankly Horace, your reputation is already spotty from the New York incident. We may be willing to look the other way. But, you don't want to further damage it by being associated with Lefty Wilson.

ACE

Is that so? Well, he doesn't need another game here in London.

Ace stands, looks at the three Men...

ACE (CONT'D)

I'll show you "suitable."

EXT. JFK AIRPORT NEW YORK - EVENING

AERIAL SHOT - planes coming and going, the Manhattan skyline in the distance - the red sun setting.

CLOSE ON Airplane TIRES hitting the ground, smoke billowing as they screech along the runway.

INT. JFK AIRPORT NEW YORK - NIGHT

Ace and Lefty step out of the terminal and are greeted by an over weight Italian named, FAT EDDY.

ACE

Lefty. Eddy.

Lefty extends his hand. Eddy just nods, takes Ace and Lefty's bags, turns and starts walking. Lefty gives Ace a look, Ace shrugs.

ACE (CONT'D)

He's friendlier once you get to know him.

INT. TOWNCAR - NIGHT

Fat Eddy drives, wearing a limo hat. Ace and Lefty sit in the back seat.

FAT EDDY

I took the money you sent and rented a townhouse on Sutton Place. It's got the maid, the butler, the whole works.

ACE

How long do we have it?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

FAT EDDY
Till the money runs out.

ACE
Good.

Ace turns to Lefty.

ACE (CONT'D)
I've got a list of places I'm
going to take you; Restaurants,
clothing stores, galleries. We've
got to establish you in the right
circles around town.

FAT EDDY
Just one thing, boss about you
running around town. Rumor's out
that you coming back. And not
everybody's happy to hear that.

Eddy's statement hangs in the air, as a cloud comes to
Ace's face...

ACE
Noted.

EXT. SUTTON PLACE - NIGHT

Eddy beeps the horn as the Sedan approaches a three-story
brownstone, tucked away on Sutton Place. The garage door
opens, then closes when they're inside.

INT. ACE'S BROWNSTONE - CONTINUING

Eddy leads Ace and Lefty into the Living Room, they look
around the house, it's much larger than it appears from
the outside. Each piece of furniture is an expensive
antique, everything is polished and in its proper place.

ACE
This will do.

LEFTY
I could get use to this.

VOICE (O.C.)
Mr. White?

Ace and Lefty turn to see a silver-haired, Swedish WOMAN
coming down the wrought-iron staircase.

ACE
Hilda!!

Ace crosses to her and gives her a big hug.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

ACE (CONT'D)

Eddy didn't say you were working with us on this one.

HILDA

I wanted to surprise you.

Ace turns to Lefty.

ACE

Lefty this is Hilda, one of the best in the business.

They shake hands.

HILDA

Is there anything I can get for you, coffee, a night cap?

ACE

No thanks, we're going to turn in. Can you show Lefty to his room.

Hilda nods and takes Lefty up the stairs. Ace turns to Eddy after they leave.

ACE (CONT'D)

How's everything looking?

FAT EDDY

Good. The rest of the crew comes in the next couple days. I got Jimmy and Izzy. Manny's on another job, says he'll come as soon as he can.

INT. BROWNSTONE - LEFTY'S BEDROOM - MORNING

Hilda opens the door to Lefty's room. Light streams through the curtains.

HILDA

Mr. Wilson, it is eleven-o-clock.

Lefty's head raises from underneath the lush covers, completely unaware of where he is...

HILDA (CONT'D)

Sir. Mr. White is waiting.

LEFTY

Yeah, yeah, okay, okay.

HILDA

Would you like something to eat before you depart, Sir?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

LEFTY

No, thanks.

Hilda exits. Lefty looks around his room, grins. He could definitely get used to this.

EXT. TOWNCAR - DAY

Eddy holds the door as Ace and Lefty step out of the car.

WE HAVE A SERIES OF CUTS OF ACE AND LEFTY

Ace stands to the side as Lefty is having suits tailored on Madison Ave.

Ace nods as Lefty tries on shoes.

Lefty, having his hair cut, while getting a manicure and pedicure.

EXT. FIFTH AVENUE - DAY

Ace and Lefty walk arms full of shopping bags.

ACE

No, no. The Half-Windsor is for Standard Shirt Collars. The Four-In-Hand is for Tab and Button-Down Collars.

LEFTY

Right. Okay. And the Prince Albert is for...

ACE

Long Collars. But, it depends on the tie's fabric.

LEFTY

Can't y'all just tie a tie the regular way and leave it at that?

ACE

No, that's the point. When you sit at the table with these guys, they're going to know if you're wearing a Half-Windsor or a Prince Albert. They're going to know if the cuticles on your nails have been cut.

Ace stops, approaches the door of a small shop.

ACE (CONT'D)

Best shirt-maker in town.

INT. SUTTON PLACE - TOWNHOUSE - DAY

Ace and Lefty enter the house, sitting in the living room are Jimmy Palusso and IZZIE RODRIGUEZ, a man who's made his name by knowing all things of interest. Ace smiles.

ACE
Look what the cat dragged in...

The Men stand. Big hugs all around.

ACE (CONT'D)
Gentlemen, this is Lefty Wilson.
Lefty... Izzie Rodriguez and you
know Jimmy Palusso. These are the
Men who are going to help you get
to the Big Biazarro.

A huge smile comes to Lefty's face.

LEFTY
The Biazarro? Ace, thanks, thank
you so much!

ACE
Like I said, it's time to shake
things up.
(beat)
Now let's meet'em, greet'em,
jam'em and beat'em.

INT. SUTTON PLACE - TOWNHOUSE - LATER

Lefty, Jimmy, Izzie and Fat Eddy watch as Ace points to a number of pictures pinned on a board.

ACE
These are the most likely
candidates who'll be playing the
Big B.

Ace points to a different group.

ACE (CONT'D)
These are the players you'll have
to get through, to get to sit at a
table with these chosen few.

Ace drops a stack of folders on the table.

ACE (CONT'D)
Lefty, I want you to study these
players, you need to know
everything about them.
(Indicating the crew)
(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

ACE (CONT'D)
 These guys will play in the style
 of everyone of them. It's all
 about adjustment.

CUT TO:

MONTAGE

Lefty playing Jimmy, Izzie and Fat Eddy.

Ace walking around the table looking at everyone's hand.

Ace shaking his head, no. Reaching into Lefty's hand
 pointing at a card.

Ace smiling nodding, yes.

Lefty head in his hands. Tired.

Lefty playing game after game.

Lefty gets a pat on the back from Ace after winning.

INT. SUTTON PLACE - GAMEROOM - NIGHT

Ace, Lefty and the rest of the Crew are finishing a day
 of intense work. Ace rises.

ACE
 That's it for today, gentlemen.
 I'm going to turn in. Good play
 Lefty, good play.

Lefty, Jimmy, Fat Eddy and Izzie also rise.

LEFTY
 I'm hungry, let's go out - get
 some'em to eat.

JIMMY
 Naw, I'm beat. I'll see you
 tomorrow.

FAT EDDY
 Yeah, me too.

LEFTY
 Ah, come on.

IZZIE
 You're young, dumb and full of
 cum, kid. I'm not anymore.

LEFTY
 I'm gonna head out then.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Ace stops Lefty.

ACE
Not looking like that you're not.
Get changed, put on a suit and a
tie with the appropriate knot.

Ace takes a piece of paper and writes.

ACE (CONT'D)
I want you to go to this
restaurant. Tell the maitre d' I
sent you.

Lefty takes the paper and heads for the stairs to change.

ACE (CONT'D)
Eddy will drive you. And Lefty
after you've finished come back
home. No slumming.

INT. RESTAURANT - NIGHT

Lefty is eating at one of New York's finest restaurants.

He looks up from his delightfully seasoned Steak to a
large MAN staring at him from a table directly across the
room. The Man is not projecting love for Lefty.

Lefty fidgets as the Man rises and starts across the
room. The Man draws closer, Lefty puts his hands under
the table, giving the impression he has a gun. The Man
leans on the front edge of Lefty's table.

MAN
Is your name Lefty Wilson?

LEFTY
That's right.

MAN
Well, my name is Stan Kondor.

The Man waits for Lefty to show some sign of recognition.

LEFTY
Am I supposed to faint now?

STAN
I think you should know you're
hanging out with the wrong man.

LEFTY
Who's that?

STAN
Ace White.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

LEFTY

Don't tell me he's got a
contagious disease.

STAN

No, but he may as well have an
incurable one.

Lefty looks at the large Man leaning in his face.

LEFTY

Stan, if you don't mind... You're
ruining my appetite.

Stan straightens up, looks down at Lefty.

STAN

I heard you were a nice kid, so I
came over to talk to you, see if I
could save you some trouble. But,
you're gonna let Ace drag you
right down with him.

He turns and walks away. His two HENCHMEN follow.

INT. TOWNCAR - NIGHT

Lefty sits in the back of the towncar. Eddy drives.

LEFTY

You ever heard of Stan Kondor?

An uncomfortable energy fills the car.

EDDY

Russian importer, shady
connections. Why?

LEFTY

Came up to me in the restaurant,
said be careful, I was hanging
with the wrong person.

Eddy stops for a red light, looks up into the rear view
mirror.

EDDY

I wouldn't worry about it, kid.

We push in on Lefty.

LEFTY

Take me to a hundred twenty-ninth
and Lenox.

EDDY

Can't do that. Ace made it clear-

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Lefty just jumps out of the car while the light is still red, runs for a taxi.

INT. SEDAN - CONTINUOUS

P.O.V through the window-shield of an unknown Sedan as Lefty climbs into the taxi - takes off. The car follows.

INT. TAXI - NIGHT

Lefty watches the streets of Harlem pass. Boarded up buildings juxtaposed against newly renovated ones. The taxi pulls up to a building somewhere in between...

CAB DRIVER

Lenox and 129th.

The Cab Driver shuts off the meter. Lefty pays, but before he gets out, a MAN exits the building, clearly upset. He kicks over a trash can, walks down the street. On Lefty - maybe not a good night...

LEFTY

Take me back downtown. Seventy-eighth and Sutton Place.

EXT. ACE'S TOWNHOUSE - LATE

Lefty steps out of the cab, a steady but pleasant rain has begin to fall. Lefty feels a chill as the taxi pulls away, the late night winds find their way up from the East River. He strolls toward the Brownstone, pleased with himself for resisting the temptation to play cards with the dubious set.

He feels the sting of a rain drop dripping into his eye, just as he feels the weight of a steel pipe hitting him on the right temple!

A size thirteen shoe buries itself agonizingly deep into his stomach! The blur of pipe crashes against the side of his head again, sending him face down to the pavement!

TWO MEN lift Lefty and throw him against a parked car. We hear the crack of Lefty's rib as one Man's fist goes deep into his side and the other Man strikes Lefty again with the steel pipe sending him back to the pavement!

MAN

That's enough.

Lefty, blindly reaches out for the Men, only to receive another deadly kick to the chest. Everything goes...

BLACK --

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

We fade in on a white, out of focus haze, as the movement of shadowy figures skim the periphery.

VOICE
He's lucky to be alive...

The out of focus haze slowly comes into focus...

INT. HOSPITAL CORRIDOR - NIGHT

Ace stands with a DOCTOR, just outside of the INTENSIVE CARE UNIT.

DOCTOR
...he has two fractures in his skull. Some broken ribs and a great deal of internal bleeding.

ACE
What are his chances, Doc?

DOCTOR
If no clots form in the head area, he'll be okay. But, if you know anyone from his family, next of kin, I'd give them a call.

The Doctor walks away. Ace stands there, pain in his eyes. We pull back as Ace drops his head, a lone figure in the hospital corridor.

INT. HOSPITAL WAITING ROOM -- DAWN

A FAMILIAR VOICE (O.C.)
You bring good luck in cards - bad luck in everything else, Ace.

Ace is stretched out in a chair, wakes up, rubs his face, getting his bearings. Standing in front of him is LESTER WILSON SR., Lefty's father.

ACE
How long you been here?

LESTER WILSON
Most of the night. Police think it might be racially motivated. But, I know it had something to do with you. Always does.

ACE
I'm sorry, Lester.

LESTER WILSON
If my kid dies...

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

ACE

I didn't want to take him, but
when I realized he was your son, I
thought, here's a chance to make
things right.

Lester Sr. is silent.

ACE (CONT'D)

You ever seen him play?

LESTER WILSON

After I quit, I never even had a
deck of cards in the house.

ACE

He has everything you had, and he
might even be better.

Lester Sr. takes in what Ace has told him. Doctor
Alexander, the attending physician approaches.

DOCTOR

Mr. Wilson, you can see him now.

INT. HOSPITAL ROOM -- LEFTY'S POV

Through blurry whiteness, Ace's face comes half into
focus. As the fog clears a bit more, Lefty's eyes find
his Father's. He tries to smile.

LEFTY

Hey, dad.

LESTER WILSON

You're gonna be alright. We'll
get through this, you'll be back
home in no time.

LEFTY

I'm not coming back.

Mr. Wilson takes in Lefty, stretched out in front of him.

LESTER WILSON

I told you this life wasn't gon'
bring you nothing but grief. Come
home, son. This is the last time
I'm asking.

A beat. Lefty shakes his head.

LEFTY

Sorry, dad. I gotta see this
thing through.

Mr. Wilson looks at Lefty a long time - then, over at
Ace. And without another word, he turns and walks out.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Ace sits on the edge of Lefty's bed, doesn't quite know what to say...

ACE
Did you recognize anybody?

LEFTY
No, but I know it was two of them.

ACE
They say anything?

Lefty closes his eyes a moment, thinking.

LEFTY
Vozmez... some foreign language.
Vozmed... dea... I think.

The color drains from Ace's face. He tries to conceal the flash of rage in his eyes. He stands.

ACE
Excuse me a minute.

Ace crosses to the door.

LEFTY
Ace, you alright?

ACE
Just going to the can, kid.

INT. HOSPITAL CORRIDOR

Ace exits. Walks down the hallway.

INT. MEN'S BATHROOM - CONTINUOUS

Ace enters the Men's room, leans his back against the door a moment, then begins to pace. Seeing no one around, he loses it - pounding his fist into the side of the bathroom stall. Releasing his rage until exhaustion takes hold. He leans his head against the wall gasping for breath. He stays there regaining his equilibrium, reaches into his pocket, pulls out his cell phone, dials.

ACE
Izzie? Ace. Find Stan Kondor....

EXT. HOSPITAL - DAYS LATER

An ORDERLY pushes Lefty out of the hospital in a wheelchair. Ace walks alongside Lefty as they approach the Towncar. Waiting at the car are Fat Eddy and a beautiful dark haired NURSE, in uniform.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

ACE

This is Lola Maldonado, she's
going to be your live-in nurse.

Lefty looks at Lola, slowly and with great effort, he
rises from the wheelchair.

LEFTY

Damn, if I knew this was the kinda
care waitin' at home. I woulda
left here a week ago.

Lola smiles, helps him into the car.

INT. ACE'S BROWNSTONE - NIGHT

The FIREPLACE crackles as Lefty sits staring into the
flames. Ace stops in the doorway to the living room,
watches Lefty a moment.

ACE

How are you feeling?

LEFTY

A little tired.

A beat.

LEFTY (CONT'D)

Ace... What did you do to Stan
Kondor?

Ace takes a long pause.

ACE

I killed his father.

Lefty doesn't take his eyes off the fire.

LEFTY

Why?

ACE

I didn't have a choice.

LEFTY

So you can sleep at night?

ACE

Not a night since.

Ace turns to walk away.

LEFTY

Ace...

He stops, his back still to Lefty - Lefty's back to him,
eyes still on the fire.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

LEFTY (CONT'D)
 ...I don't want you to feel bad
 about what happened to me,
 alright?

Ace doesn't respond...

LEFTY (CONT'D)
 It's 'cause of you, I'm livin' a
 dream.
 (beat)
 My father never wanted me playing
 cards. It's what I wanted. What
 I still want.

Ace stands there, mixed emotions - neither man looks back
 at the other. Finally...

ACE
 Okay, kid.

INT. ACE'S BROWNSTONE

A SERIES OF SHOTS -

Lefty beginning his rehabilitation.

Lefty with the nurse, holding him up while he tries to
 walk -

Ace dealing, flipping cards showing them to Lefty.

Lola helping Lefty out of a chair.

Ace watching with concern as Lefty grabs his head in
 pain.

Ace, Lefty, Gatsby and Lola playing cards.

Lefty leaving the table in frustration.

Lefty, alone, dealing cards in the mirror.

INT. PRIVATE CLUB - NIGHT

Ace and Lefty, who now walks with a cane, move through a
 crowd of New York's beautiful people - a world where old
 money meets the fifteen minute-ers. Ace is being greeted
 warmly by all they pass, when he is approached by Izzie.

IZZIE
 Ace.

Izzie takes Ace by the arm and leads him away.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

IZZIE (CONT'D)

...Excuse us a moment.

ACE

Any word on Kondor?

IZZIE

He hasn't been seen since that night, but you shouldn't be here.

ACE

I can't very well stay cooped up in the house, now can I?

IZZIE

It's dangerous, Ace.

ACE

Then find him. I want him found. He never should have brought Lefty into this.

IZZIE

Speakin' a Lefty. I can't get any of the masters to play him. They're closing up on the kid. But, word is they're having a hi-low session in San Juan this weekend and a lot of 'em will be there. I think if you two just show up at a table, they're gonna have to let him play. But just know, if you do that, they're gonna stack the table to beat him, and he'll have no shot at the Biazarro.

Ace thinks a moment...

ACE

Book a flight anyway.

INT. AIRPORT TERMINAL - JFK - DAY

Ace and Lefty walk through the terminal.

ANGLE ON - Izzie, Jimmy and Fat Eddy as they approach from the opposite direction, bags in tow. Izzie hands Ace a thick envelope.

IZZIE

Complete dossiers on the players who'll be there and planning to make a run for the Big B. Also, there're two newcomers planning to get in the mix. One is a girl, name is Linda Grizzard.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

IZZIE (CONT'D)
Dad's a millionaire, been training her for the Big B since she was six. The other is a guy, C. K. Langershim, also rich, also good. Word has it the two are playing each other in Vegas tonight. Hear a lotta eyes gonna be on that game.

Ace fingers through the dossiers.

IZZIE (CONT'D)
Also, Sporados announced the players for the Biazarro will be selected by December.

ACE
That doesn't give us enough time to beat four masters.

IZZIE
There'll be a lot of 'em in San Juan. Gotta try a make a dent.

EXT. SAN JUAN - SKY VIEW

We descend upon the sparkling lights of San Juan.

INT. AMERICANA HOTEL - CASINO - NIGHT

Ace and Lefty walk through the Casino.

ACE
You need to take at least two Masters tonight. If you don't, it's going to be hard to make the cut in time. Three masters are confirmed to play.

(beat)
You've looked over all the dossiers?

LEFTY
Yeah, but some of 'em don't have pictures.

ACE
You don't need pictures. Just the name and their game.

INT. AMERICANA HOTEL - CASINO GAME SUITE - CONTINUOUS

Ace and Lefty approach the table of Poker Masters, Hank Boswell, KENNETH MARTIN JACOBS and MALCOLM LAUREATE.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

They are seated with TWO non-Masters, but good players, BRUCE JAMES and JACK BUCHANAN. Ace points to an empty chair.

ACE
Gentlemen, do you mind?

The Men look from Ace to Lefty, no one replies. Ace motions for Lefty to take the chair.

ACE (CONT'D)
We'd be delighted.

Lefty sits. Hank Boswell stares daggers into Ace. Ace smiles pleasantly.

ACE (CONT'D)
Lefty, this is Hank Boswell,
Kenneth Jacobs, Malcolm Laureate,
Bruce James and Jack Buchanan.

Lefty takes in each face with the name.

The POKER MOTIF - A SERIES of CLOSE UPS that move us through time: Cards hitting the table. Chips being pushed into the pot. Chips being pulled out of the pot. Close up of EYES - HANDS - LIPS - FINGERS - CIGARETTES - PERSPIRATION on BROWS.

Lefty is losing, the table is stacked against him. The Poker Masters seem to be a unified front, playing to oust Lefty. Ace's pleasant smile is long gone. He stands to the side looking very concerned. Lefty begins to rub his head, grimacing in pain.

A smirking Hank Boswell stands...

BOSWELL
Let's take a break, gentlemen.

As Boswell passes Ace, he pauses briefly...

BOSWELL (CONT'D)
Are you sure your little project's
been worth it, Horace?

Ace's face flushes with anger. He's about to go after Boswell, when Lefty grabs his arm.

LEFTY
You alright?

Ace pulls Lefty over to the side.

ACE
I'm fine.
(beat)
I think we outta call it a night.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

LEFTY

Nah, I'm good.

ACE

You're not. We can't risk it.
Boswell's on a roll. Walk away
now and we can get a pass for
illness. But, if you lose to
Boswell tonight, we can kiss the
Biazarro goodbye.

Lefty looks at Ace warily.

ACE (CONT'D)

It's the right play.

CUT TO:

CLOSE ON LEFTY

LEFTY

But, didn't you say if I don't
beat two masters tonight it's
gonna be hard to make the cut?

INT. AMERICANA HOTEL - CONTINUOUS

Ace and Lefty are walking down the ninth floor corridor.

ACE

Yeah, but losing to one would be
worst. This is like working your
way to a title fight in boxing.
You've got to come in undefeated
to be a contender.

They approach the door to their respective hotel rooms.

ACE (CONT'D)

Let's catch a few hours sleep,
then figure out our next move.

Ace puts the key in his door. Lefty nods.

INT. AMERICANA HOTEL - LEFTY'S BATHROOM -

Lefty stares at himself in the mirror, bends down and
splashes his face with water, pops three pills.

INT. AMERICANA HOTEL - GAME SUITE - LATER

The early morning sun sends warm rays into the game
suite. Malcolm Laureate, Hank Boswell and Kenneth Jacobs
are still playing, when they look up and see Lefty. He
smiles, then sits.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

LEFTY

Gentlemen.

BOSWELL

Ace said you'd be back.

Lefty looks up, sitting over in the corner of the room with a scotch and milk in his hand is Ace. He smiles, picks up a cup of coffee, walks over, hands it to Lefty, then whispers.

ACE

Don't look so surprised, I can read every move you're going to make. Now, just nod, I want Boswell to think I'm telling you something profound, because I am. Don't bluff, play the cards in your hand and play for low. Got it?

Lefty nods. Jacobs begins to deal.

JACOBS

Seven-card hi-low.

The POKER MOTIF - CLOSE UPS that move us through time. SHOTS OF cards hitting the table. Chips being pushed into the pot. Chips being pulled out of the pot. EYES, HANDS, PERSPIRATION on brows.

CLOSE ON a large pile of chips - WE TILT UP and find Lefty sitting in front of the stack. Boswell now has a small stack and a concerned look on his face. Malcolm stands, he's out. Boswell and Lefty go head to head.

RAPID SEQUENCE OF LINES AND SHOTS --

CHIPS HIT TABLE - "Call" MORE CHIPS - "Raise" - "Raise Twenty" -- "Raise Fifty" -- CHIPS -- "Fifty More" -- HAND WRITES MARKER -- "Fifty More" - CHIPS -- "Call..." CARDS TURN OVER.... *We ramp back to real time and into...*

CLOSE UP OF Boswell as he stares at the cards, stunned! He slowly looks up at Lefty...

BOSWELL

You don't look like a poker player; you don't talk like a poker player, you don't act like a poker player, and you sure don't play like a poker player. You're an amateur; but that's your thing, isn't it? People take one look at you and they're sure they can beat you. And even when you're beating them, they look at you and still don't believe it.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

Ace leans over to count the chips, cash and markers.

ACE
Hank, the bottom line, is you owe
us amateurs two hundred and
seventy-four thousand dollars...

INT. STRETCH LIMOUSINE - DAY

Ace, Lefty, Izzie, Jimmy, Fat Eddy, and a new crew member
MANNY, a burly Greek, sit in a semi-circle in the back of
a speeding Limo.

ACE
Now that you've beaten Boswell and
Malcolm, Sporados feels that it's
between you and C. K. Langershim
or you and Linda Grizzard for that
last seat.

LEFTY
Why between us?

ACE
You've all beaten masters and I
think he'd like some fresh blood
in the game. He's got the other
players he wants in mind and lot
of them don't want anything to do
with you. But, being last year's
champion he gets to call the
shots.

LEFTY
Then let's go meet 'em, greet 'em,
jam 'em and beat 'em.

EXT. LAS VEGAS - STRIP - NIGHT

WE SEE - the glittering strip, an abstract collage of
lights, that take us to Ace and Lefty being escorted into
the Palm Casino.

INT. PALM CASINO - NIGHT

Ace and Lefty walk to the elevators flanked by THREE MEN
in dark suits. Ace turns to Lefty, points his finger.

ACE
Don't play anything.

LEFTY
Okay.

Ace disappears into the elevator. The third Man stays
with Lefty to escort him around, show him the place.

INT. PALMS CASINO - CONTINUOUS

Ace exits the elevator, the Two Men escort him to a stylishly comfortable office, where he is greeted by GEORGE, JOE and PHIL MALOOF, the owners of the casino. They approach Ace warmly, giving him a big hug.

GEORGE

Ace, good to see you. You look great.

The Brothers cross over to a butter soft leather couch, plop down and put their feet up on the coffee table.

JOE

Sit, sit. Can we get you something?

ACE

Scotch and milk, please.

Joe motions to one of the Guys to get Ace a drink.

PHIL

So, Ace, what can we do for you?

ACE

I hear C. K. Langershim and Linda Grizzard's are in town.

GEORGE

They were. She left after beating the crap outta C. K.

PHIL

He might still be around. But, I heard she's heading to Malibu to relax.

JOE

Why you asking?

ACE

I've got a proposal for you...

EXT. MALIBU - BEACH HOUSE - DAY

We Pan across the beach, the cream colored sand takes us to Ace, Lefty and Manny stepping out on the deck of a slick Malibu Colony pad.

ACE

Not bad. How much it cost us?

MANNY

You don't wanna know. Come on I'll show you Linda.

INT. BEACH HOUSE - CONTINUOUS

Ace and Lefty follow Manny up the stairs to the second-floor hallway and up a ladder to the attic. There, Manny has put in a two-way mirror and rigged a pair of electrical binoculars for extreme close-up viewing.

MANNY

She's not out there now, but she usually takes a walk on the beach right after lunch.

ACE

Alone?

MANNY

She walks alone, but there's a pair of gorillas always close-by.

ACE

Who else is with her?

MANNY

Her father...

(beat)

It's the blue house three doors up. Man wait 'till you see her, she's something else.

ACE

We're not here to drool over Linda Grizzard. We're here to beat her.

Lefty's eyes are glued to the binoculars.

ACE (CONT'D)

You see anything?

LEFTY

Nothing yet.

ACE

I'll be back.

Lefty continues to look through the glasses, three hundred yards from the shore are a half-dozen white sailboats dipping and slanting as they slice their way through the rocky, wind-swept surface of the ocean.

Lefty pans back to the shore, he is looking at the terrace of Linda Grizzard's beach house again, when a YOUNG WOMAN floats across the terrace and leans against the rail looking out at the ocean. She is dressed in a tiny blue bikini that barely covers her vital areas. Her body is superb, statuesque, curvy, with long legs and full breasts. She has reddish blond hair that falls across her shoulders, obscuring what can no doubt be a magnificent profile.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

LEFTY
MANNY! MANNY, COME HERE!

Manny bolts up the stairs, followed by Ace.

LEFTY (CONT'D)
Is this her?

Manny looks through the eye piece.

MANNY
Yeah, that's her.

Ace takes the binoculars, looks, impressed.

ACE
It's a good thing you're seeing
her now. Maybe by the time you
meet her at the poker table,
you'll be able to concentrate on
the game.

Ace hands Lefty back the binoculars, heads back down the stairs. Manny follows.

Lefty moves back into place with the binoculars, watches as Linda glides from the terrace and onto the sand. She walks up the beach in Lefty's direction. Lefty is mesmerized by the form moving across the sand.

As she moves closer Lefty pans down to her feet, gently kicking up sand as she walks. He pans up her long shapely legs - up past her tiny bikini bottoms - past her sinewy abs, over her full breast, to her face.

ANGLE ON LEFTY as his mouth drops.

LEFTY
Angel?

ANGLE ON - Linda, now close enough to see her face. It's ANGEL! Her dark hair is now reddish blond. She now exudes a completely different persona, a level of grace, and elegance never exhibited by the Angel Lefty met in France.

FLASHBACKS - QUICK SHOTS

Of Angel with dark hair, fighting for her purse.

Angel saying, "Teach me to play cards."

Angel learning from Lefty.

Angel shuffling badly with Ace and Lefty.

Angel wearing the white sun dress, on the deck of the yacht, arguing with an older Man.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

Lefty falls back against the wall, sinks to the floor,
puts his head in his hands.

INT. BEACH HOUSE - DAY

Ace, Lefty and Manny are in the attic. Ace has the
binoculars trained on Linda's terrace, where Linda
stands, draped in a sarong, a drink in her hand.

ACE

We've been hustled and she's going
to use every detail she's gotten
out of us to her advantage.

(beat)

Is the older Man her father?

He hands the binoculars to Manny. Manny takes a look...

MANNY

Yeah, that's him. Made a ton in
real estate. Keeps a tight leash
on her, rarely takes his eyes off
of her.

Lefty grabs the binoculars. Linda's been joined on the
terrace by a distinguished Man with a mane of white hair.

LEFTY

That's her father? Shit....

He lowers the binoculars, rubs his temples.

ACE

What?

LEFTY

I saw him in France, when you set
up that poker game. I was
standing on deck and I saw Angel
arguing with him on a yacht
nearby. I thought he was a
"john." I was so pissed at her.

Lefty raises the binoculars. Watches Linda's father put
his arm around her waist. Lefty is filled with emotions.

INT. BEACH HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - DAY

Ace stands in front of Lefty and the Crew...

ACE

Here's the situation, I tried to
get us more time, in light of the
Angel stunt Linda pulled on us,
but they said, no.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

ACE (CONT'D)

There's been so much talk about you two playing each other that the Masters have decided to use your game for a convention-type thing next week. A five-hundred thousand dollar stand-off. Just you and her.

LEFTY

Ace, I don't know how I'm gonna be able to sit across a table from her and play.

ACE

That's exactly where she wants you.

LEFTY

I can't do it.

ACE

You've got to, every one of the Masters will be there, the Maloof Brothers agreed to back us, it's either now or never, and there's no opponent but Linda Grizzard.

Lefty stands silently a moment.

LEFTY

Where?

ACE

In Vegas. At the Bellagio. In Bobby's room.

LEFTY

The glass sanctuary...

ACE

In the mean time we prepare. The four of us are going to play every conceivable hand there is and try a figure out if there's anything you might have given away.

The POKER MOTIF but with FAST CUTS THAT GRADUALLY SLOW DOWN-

LEFTY, ACE, AND CREW PLAYING CARDS CONSTANTLY.

LEFTY, SITTING ALONE AT A TABLE, DEALING CARDS WITH PICTURES ON THE TABLE OF LINDA.

LEFTY READING LINDA'S DOSSIER, THROWING IT DOWN.

EXT. PALMS CASINO - DAY

AERIAL VIEW - as we zoom in on Ace, Lefty and Manny moving, fully clothed, through the pool area of the Palms. They pass the oiled bodies of the young and fab.

INT. PALMS CASINO - SUITE - DAY

The guys open the door to their suite, waiting for them are Izzie, SPORADOS, and George Palmer Deeds.

They all hug, George and Ace make eye contact, an awkwardness passes between them. George whispers to Ace.

DEEDS

The kid don't look so good. Is he okay? 'Cause I'm bettin' a million a day on him.

ACE

Last I saw you, he wasn't "suitable."

Ace looks in Lefty's direction. Lefty catches his eye. Ace gets the message.

ACE (CONT'D)

Gentlemen, what do you say we let Lefty settle in and we'll see you at the Bellagio.

Ace begins to escort the group to the door. Sporados, the host of this year's Big Biazarro, walks over to Lefty, stares at him as if trying to figure him out.

SPORADOS

I'm impartial, but I would hate for you to make a bad showing.

LEFTY

I'll try not to disappoint.

Sporados turns and exits.

IZZIE

The word is all the Masters have arrived in town and the odds are heavily in Linda's favor.

ACE

Good, the more people who bet on her, the more money we'll win...

Ace crosses over, flops down on the couch. Ace, Lefty, Manny, Jimmy, Fat Eddy and Izzie all sit around in a semi-circle, concerned looks on their faces.

FADE OUT.

EXT. BELLAGIO CASINO - DAY

Ace and Lefty climb out of a Limo and walk toward the north entrance of the Bellagio. It's game time.

INT. BELLAGIO CASINO - MALL - CONTINUOUS

They walk past the high end boutiques connected to the Bellagio. Chanel, Gucci, Prada, Armani... A quiet tension hangs above them...

LEFTY

There's something she's got,
something I can't figure out.

ACE

Use your gut. The rest you'll
figure out once you're sitting
across from her.

INT. BELLAGIO CASINO - POKER ROOM - CONTINUING

Ace and Lefty walk through the Bellagio Poker room. The seats are raised on a platform so the Masters can have a better view of the game. They move past the seats to the glass room sanctuary called Bobby's room. Named after Bobby Baldwin one of the best poker players in the world. He also happens to run the Bellagio Casino. Bobby comes down to greet the players, along with Sporados.

ACE

It's noon. Where's Linda?

SPORADOS

She's running late.

ACE

She's got five minutes or we walk.

The sound of "oohs" and "ahhs" take Ace, Lefty, Bobby and Sporados' attention to the entrance of the main room. Linda Grizzard has arrived, draped in a full-length white dress, with a low bodice to reveal her healthy cleavage.

Someone shouts, "Go get him, Linda" as she reaches Bobby's room. Linda enters, stands across from Lefty, they stare at each other.

LINDA

Sorry I'm late.

Her manner of speaking is completely different from the Brooklyn accent of Angel. She now has no accent and speaks with simple refined articulation.

Lefty doesn't respond. He stands there about to implode.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Linda takes her seat. Lefty finally does as well. Sporados walks up carrying a brief case, opens it and dumps twenty-four Bee decks, twelve black and twelve red, out on the green felt table.

Lefty and Linda test them by feeling and smelling the decks. Linda picks five and Lefty picks five. Sporados sits in the third seat.

SPORADOS

I will be your dealer. Do you both approve?

Lefty and Linda nod their approval.

SPORADOS (CONT'D)

The buy-in is five hundred thousand with no reprieve. You lose the five hundred, you lose the match. During the match, you will be allowed to have one adviser, you each have two break calls per day. If the match has not been decided by twelve midnight, we will recess and begin the next day at noon. Agreed?

They both nod, while keeping their eyes pinned on each other.

SPORADOS (CONT'D)

Your advisors?

LINDA

My father, Harrison Grizzard.

LEFTY

My Guardian, Ace White.

Lefty finds Ace's eyes. He had said it jokingly, but underneath lies a great deal of emotional truth.

SPORADOS

If I should grow tired and would like for someone to take my place as dealer, Bobby Baldwin will sit in. Do you agree?

They agree.

SPORADOS (CONT'D)

The game will be five-card stud only. I will deal from left to right and I will start with a black deck. May we have the chips, please?

An ATTENDANT brings the chips forward and starts to place them on the table.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

SPORADOS (CONT'D)

The blue chips are worth five
thousand, the red a thousand and
the whites are one hundred
dollars.

Sporados breaks the seal on the deck, starts to shuffle.
Lefty's heart is pounding so hard it's causing his ribs
to vibrate. Linda, on the other hand, seems completely
at ease. Sporados places the deck in front of Lefty.

SPORADOS (CONT'D)

Cut, Lefty.

Lefty cuts, but drops the cards. Sporados nonchalantly
straightens the deck and places it for Lefty to cut
again. This time Lefty makes a clean cut. Linda
smiles...

LINDA

It's only a game.

Lefty stares into Linda's eyes.

LEFTY

It was never a game to me.

SPORADOS

Your bet, jack.

Lefty looks at his hole card.

LEFTY

I'll pass.

LINDA

So will I.

The POKER MOTIF - Lefty and Linda are intense, focused,
as they try to feel each other out - looking for that
"tick," that "tell," that mistake that will give one of
them the advantage. As the hours tick - neither has
found one, but Linda slowly inches into Lefty's stack.
Sporados looks up at the clock, it's six p.m., he stands.

SPORADOS

It is time for our dinner break.

INT. HOTEL SUITE - PALMS CASINO - LATER

Ace and Lefty are in Ace's hotel suite. Lefty is pacing.

ACE

You okay?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

LEFTY

How can she just sit there like nothing happened. Like she's never even met me before?

ACE

Lefty listen to me... I want you to see her as the one block between you and playing the Big Biazarro. That's it, you understand?

Lefty takes a long pause.

ACE (CONT'D)

Did you notice her father make a sound one time?

LEFTY

Yeah, I heard that, too! You think they've got some kind of signals working?

ACE

Who knows, but you can believe if he does it again, I'll have it.

Ace moves to the door.

LINDA (OVER)

You're late this time.

INT. BELLAGIO CASINO - POKER ROOM - LATER

Ace and Lefty walk up to the table at seven after seven.

LEFTY

Now we're even.

Sporados and Bobby Baldwin smile at the comment.

LINDA

Not quite. I'm twenty-two thousand ahead.

Lefty gives nothing, determined not to let Linda get to him.

CLOSE ON CARDS being dealt. We Pan up to Bobby Baldwin, now dealing, some time has passed, Sporados has taken a break. Linda's stack has grown. Bobby lays down the fourth card to each player. The clock reads 11:30.

Linda takes a peek at her cards. She has a four-card flush, ace-king high. Lefty looks at his hand. He just caught a pair of sevens on the fourth card. He pushes chips into the center.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

LEFTY
Twenty-five thousand.

Linda, without flinching, pushes in her chips.

LINDA
Call.

Baldwin deals the fifth card. Lefty looks at Linda, senses she caught something, knows her hand has improved considerably. High vibrations are coming across the table.

LEFTY
I'll check.

Linda looks at Lefty skeptically.

LINDA
Check.

Lefty and Linda turn over their hands.

Linda wins with a pair of kings, but her father makes a grumbling sound. Lefty turns to Ace and smiles.

ACE
(softly)
I got it.

Linda, knowing she had done something wrong, stares daggers into Lefty.

LINDA
What does he have?

Lefty doesn't respond, simply smiles.

INT. HOTEL SUITE - LATER

Ace and Lefty sit at the table in Ace's suite. Lefty deals cards to Ace.

ACE
Now close your eyes. Replay
Linda's mistake in your head while
picturing her face, before, during
and after the hand.

Lefty closes his eyes replaying the hand. He speaks while keeping his eyes closed.

LEFTY
Something happened after the hand.
For a second, she let her guard
down. She did something wrong and
she was...ashamed of it.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

ACE

Exactly, she's ashamed of her mistake, as if her father might yell or spank her in public. They molded and trained her brain into a perfect poker player, but she's still only a baby looking for approval.

(then)

Find a way to use that?

EXT. LAS VEGAS - STRIP - NEXT DAY

Aerial SHOT - of high noon in Vegas. We swoop pass The Luxor, The Palms, and zoom in on The Bellagio.

Ace, Lefty, Linda and her Father all arrive on time. Linda's ample cleavage is trapped under an elegant Gucci blouse. Lefty is fashionably dressed in a suit.

LINDA

Did you sleep well?

Lefty presents a new demeanor.

LEFTY

Very well, thank you.

The POKER MOTIF - MODIFIED - Moving to slow motion. As Linda's stack of chips grows and grows.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. POKER TABLE - LATER

Lefty peeks at his cards. He has three six's. Linda looks at her hand. She has Aces over nines. She places chips in the center.

LINDA

Thirty thousand.

Lefty pushes his chips in, looks at Linda.

LEFTY

Raise you thirty.

LINDA

Call.

Sporados deals the last card.

LINDA (CONT'D)

Check.

LEFTY

Thirty.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Linda stares at Lefty, folds. Lefty pulls in the chips.

LINDA
May I ask you a question? How
does it feel to have been made a
fool of by a woman?

This hits Lefty hard, but he plays it off.

LEFTY
I wouldn't know.

LINDA
That's not what I heard.

Sporados takes a deep breath and holds up the deck. Ace
places his hand on Lefty's shoulder. Lefty glares at
Linda.

LINDA (CONT'D)
That's not what I heard at all.

Linda glares back, a condescending smile on her face.
Lefty rubs his temple, grimacing, as his head begins to
pound. Sporados looks to Lefty with concern. Lefty
turns to Sporados.

LEFTY
Deal, please.

Linda doesn't let up.

LINDA
I heard someone named Angel...

Sporados cuts Linda off.

SPORADOS
Your bet, jack.

LINDA
I bet twenty thousand.

LEFTY
I pass.

LINDA
...was not so heavenly after all.
Now the entire poker world is
laughing at you and that motley
crew you hang out with.

ACE
Bet your hand, Lefty.

Lefty barely hears Ace as he stares at Linda.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

ACE (CONT'D)
She's bullshitting. Play your
hand!

Lefty stands up, throws his cards at the deck.

LEFTY
I want a recess.

SPORADOS
What about the hand?

Lefty storms away closely followed by Ace.

INT. HOTEL SUITE - LATER

Lefty bursts through the door, Ace on his heels...

ACE
You're letting that lying bitch
play you, Lefty! What the hell is
wrong with you? We didn't come
all this way to lose this game
because you got pussy whipped in
France.

Lefty throws a vicious right hook at Ace's face, Ace
catches it in the palm of his hand. Lefty throws another
punch which grazes Ace's right jaw before Ace catches it
with the other hand. Ace stares at Lefty with eyes we've
never seen...

ACE (CONT'D)
Don't ever do that.

Ace releases Lefty's hands and Lefty lets them drop.

ACE (CONT'D)
It's come to this? After all
we've been through...

Ace walks out, slamming the door behind him.

INT. BELLAGIO CASINO - POKER ROOM - NIGHT

Lefty re-enters the poker room, his face coagulated with
anger. He takes a seat.

LEFTY
Deal, please.

Lefty stares a hole into Linda.

LEFTY (CONT'D)
You fucked up.

Lefty begins playing fierce, unrelenting poker.

INT. HOTEL SUITE - SAME

Ace sits in the dark, silhouetted by the window frame, a drink in his hand. After a long moment, he turns up the drink, crosses to his suitcase and begins packing.

INT. BELLAGIO CASINO - POKER ROOM - SAME

Lefty plays with focus and intensity, but it doesn't phase Linda.

The POKER MOTIF - With shots of Linda pulling in chips. Lefty losing one hundred and fifty thousand.

Linda pulls in more chips. Lefty losing two hundred and fifty thousand.

Linda pulls in more chips. She is now up close to FOUR HUNDRED THOUSAND DOLLARS! Lefty looks to Sporados.

LEFTY
I would like to take an early
dinner break, please.

Sporados looks to Linda, she nods her approval. Lefty rises, walks out. He hears rumblings; "This is it..." "He's done..."

INT. PALMS CASINO - HOTEL SUITE -

Lefty rushes to his hotel suite, no Ace - goes to Ace's suite, Ace's bags are gone. Lefty drops to the couch, head in hands.

FADE OUT.

INT. PALMS CASINO - SUITE - LATER

Lefty sits silently in the dark, illuminated by only the moon's glow, impending doom weighing heavily in the air.

FADE OUT:

INT. BELLAGIO CASINO - CARD ROOM -

Lefty walks back to the table, not giving away the panic surging under the surface. Linda and Sporados are waiting.

SPORADOS
We were growing concerned, Mr.
Wilson.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

LEFTY

My apologies.

LINDA

If this is the last day, I want you to know that you are one of the nicest people I've ever met. And I would like to go on knowing you.

LEFTY

And you're one of the most lying, deceitful people I've ever had the misfortune to meet. And the one thing in my life I don't want to do - is go on knowing you.

We see that Linda is actually hurt.

LINDA

I'm very sorry you feel that way.

A SERIES OF SHOTS - of Lefty and Linda playing. It's a tug of war, one player pulling in chips, then the other player pulling in chips. With each succeeding chip pull, Lefty is taking in more chips than Linda. Finally, after fending off everything Linda throws at him, Lefty pulls even.

VOICE (O.S.)

Well, that's three and a half days shot to hell.

Lefty turns to see Ace standing there. A huge smile comes to Lefty's face as he stands and crosses to Ace.

SPORADOS

I disagree, Horace. This is by far one of the best matches I have ever seen, even with all the garbage talk.

Lefty extends his hand. Ace takes it, they stare at each other a moment. Deep gratitude from Lefty.

LEFTY

Thanks.

SPORADOS

However, if Mr. Wilson would be so kind.

ACE

Finish it.

Lefty nods, sits back down.

LINDA

Wasn't that sweet.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

Lefty doesn't respond, simply holds her gaze. Linda holds Lefty's gaze in return, neither flinching. Sporados shuffles, sets the Black Bee deck down in front of Lefty.

SPORADOS

Cut it.

Lefty cuts the deck, still never taking his eyes off of Linda. Sporados deals Lefty an ace and Linda a jack up.

SPORADOS (CONT'D)

Your bet, ace.

LEFTY

I pass.

Linda eyes locked to Lefty...

LINDA

A thousand.

Lefty eyes locked to Linda...

LEFTY

Call.

Sporados deals Lefty a deuce and Linda a six.

SPORADOS

Ace-deuce bets.

LEFTY

I pass.

Linda looks at Lefty's cards, back up, cold eyes.

LINDA

Twenty thousand.

Lefty stares back, eyes equally cold.

LEFTY

I call.

Sporados deals Lefty a ten and Linda a nine.

SPORADOS

Ace still has the bet.

LEFTY

I pass.

Linda, not blinking, the tension mounting.

LINDA

Fifty thousand.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (3)

Lefty, not blinking.

LEFTY

I call.

Sporados deals the fifth and final card. Lefty catches a seven of clubs and has an ace-ten high. Linda is dealt a king and has a king-jack on board.

SPORADOS

Your bet, Lefty.

Lefty, defying Linda to look away.

LEFTY

I pass.

The room is completely silent. Linda stares at Lefty's ace-ten high, debating now whether to bet into him or not. With a slight smile, she looks up into Lefty's eyes. Lefty is glaring back, without a hint of anything.

LINDA

What was the last bet?

She says, stalling for time.

SPORADOS

Fifty thousand.

Linda thinks, never taking her eyes off of Lefty.

LINDA

I'll bet another fifty thousand.

Lefty looks at his hole card again - back up at Linda, shakes his head. It appears he's going to fold. Then, he pushes his entire stack of chips into the pot!

LEFTY

I'm all in.

Suddenly, the entire place is buzzing with whispers; "He's been checking aces on her...No, he doesn't have it...She shouldn't call...She has to call, she's got kings...Only a fool would check aces four times...Only a rat would check aces four times...He can check...A man doesn't check aces!"

Linda fiddles with her chips. Lefty sits there, expressionless. She looks into his eyes, a long stare trying to read him, trying to pull up some memory from their past together that might serve her at this moment.

FLASHBACK OF LEFTY - in her hotel room, teaching her...

LEFTY (CONT'D)

*When ever I have an Ace face up, I
play the hand, no matter what.*

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (4)

LEFTY (CONT'D)

*And usually, your opponent will
give you the benefit of the doubt,
'cause you may have another one,
but, most of the time, you don't..*

A demure smile comes to Linda's face. She pushes her entire stack into the pot. She knows she's got him...

Their eyes remain locked on one another. Lefty turns over his hole card, eyes steady. Linda turns over her's, unflinching. They now are locked in a battle of wills, which player will look down at the other's card first. Lefty doesn't budge - Linda doesn't budge. The tension in the room is unbearable. A slight smile comes to Lefty's face. Linda senses something in Lefty's eyes. Her expression shifts from defiance to hope against hope as she looks down and almost faints when she sees Lefty's PAIR OF ACES! Lefty has WON!

Linda sits there frozen. George Palmer Deeds shouts...

DEEDS

That's the slimiest thing I have
eva' seen pulled at a poka' game.

BOSWELL

There should be a law that no
player be allowed to check aces.

ACE

Checking is a part of the game,
just another form of a bluff.

JACOBS

Perhaps we should take a vote.

ACE

You vote on election day.

They all turn to Sporados, the man who actually makes the decision. Sporados rises at the table. Lefty and Linda rise and shake hands with the dealer. Sporados raises his hands signifying he wants everyone to take their seats. All comply.

SPORADOS

I personally do not approve of the
way this match was conducted by
either of the principals. It is
my belief that Miss Grizzard and
her people have used irrelevant
issues to destroy Mr. Wilson's
concentration. And in some lesser
ways, Mr. Wilson also conducted
himself in an unsportsmanlike
manner. So be it. Mr. Wilson won
the match, and Mr. Wilson will go
to the Big Biazarro in two days.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (5)

Linda stands there, visibly shaken. Her father walks over, anger in his eyes. Just as he's about to begin yelling at Linda.

LINDA

Get the hell away from me.

She turns and walks out, not even looking at her Father.

EXT. AIRPORT TARMAC - NEW YORK JFK - NIGHT

Ace, Lefty, Manny, Izzie, Jimmy and Fat Eddy come down the ramp of a private jet, the Manhattan lights shimmer in the distance. A DRIVER holds the door as the gang climbs into the Limo and drives off.

INT. MONANAGIANO'S RESTAURANT - CONT.

CLOSE ON - glasses of CHAMPAGNE clicking together. Ace, now joined by the African Princess, who's flown in from London. Lefty, Izzie, Eddy and Manny are all squeezed cozily into a round booth in one of New York's best Italian restaurants. They all down their glass of champagne. The WAITER opens another bottle of Cristal, pours. Ace lifts his glass for a toast.

ACE

To Lefty, you've made it to the Big One.

They turn their glasses up again. They've all had a bit too much to drink. Ace reaches over and pats Lefty on the cheek.

ACE (CONT'D)

You're gonna be at the table and nobody can take that away from you. You cherish it, because it's a big deal.

(takes a moment
emotions rising)

You know where I'm from? An orphanage in Dublin. I busted my ass to be the best, to get to the top. And when I got there, they snatched it out of my hands.

Ace now in a drunken state between guilt and rage.

ACE (CONT'D)

'Cause, I couldn't control my black Irish temper, I lost everything. I lost my wife, my kid, my shot at the Blazarro. But you, kid, you can go all the way.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Ace stops, stares at something. Lefty follows Ace's gaze to a booth in the back, where the HOSTESS is seating a MAN with a pair of huge BODYGUARDS, the Man has his arms around TWO YOUNG GIRLS, they turn, as they sit, we see - the Man is Stan Kondor!

LEFTY

Ace don't...

Ace sits there, staring across the room. His breathing gets heavier and heavier...

LEFTY (CONT'D)

Ace, let it ride. We got things to do. Just let it ride.

ACE

You just stay here, kid.

Ace slides out of the booth. Lefty turns to Fat Eddy for help, but Eddy is already crossing the room, followed by Manny. As one of Stan's 250-pound Bodyguards starts to get up from the table, Eddy hits him so quick and so hard the Man crashes halfway into the wooden wall behind him.

The other Bodyguard starts up, but Manny smashes a split of Chianti across his forehead.

Ace walks slowly across the room, as he approaches Stan's table, the hustler holds tight to the two Young Girls.

ACE (CONT'D)

Let the girls go.

STAN

This is not the right time for something like this.

ACE

Was it the right time when you had your thugs jumped that kid and almost kill him?

One of the teen-age Girls begins to cry. Stan lets her go, rises from the table. Locks eyes with Ace...

KONDOR

You're gonna be next.

Ace busts Stan's nose with a straight right, splattering blood on all four of them. Stan falls back into his seat. Ace grabs Stan's tie with such force that it rips away like tissue paper.

He yanks the table away and slings it across the room. He moves in on Stan and begins to pound him in the face with ferocious lefts and rights. Both girls run crying from the restaurant. Ace hits Stan several more times and steps back.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

Stan, who's face looks like a mass of red pulp, tries to get back on his feet, finally does, then passes out.

Ace turns back to see Lefty standing there, expressionless.

ACE
I couldn't let it ride, kid.

Lefty turns and walks out of the restaurant. Ace stands there a moment, then runs out after him...

ACE (CONT'D)
Lefty...

But Lefty doesn't look back, he continues down the street. Ace turns to Fat Eddy.

ACE (CONT'D)
Follow him, don't let him out of your sight.

EXT. STREET - EAST SIDE - NIGHT

Lefty walks silently down an Upper East Side street. Eddy follows in the Limo, a respectful distance behind.

INT. THE HIPPOPOTAMUS - NIGHT

Lefty sits at the bar, finishing a scotch and milk. His mood pensive as he stares into the glass.

LEFTY
Another.

Eddy walks into the bar quickly.

EDDY
Lefty, we have to leave.

LEFTY
I'll leave when I'm ready. You don't have to wait.

EDDY
It's Ace. Hilda called. He got shot in front of the house. The ambulance is on it's way.

SMASH CUT TO:

INT. LIMO - CONT.

Eddy frantically driving, Lefty's anxious face.

SMASH CUT TO:

EXT. SUTTON PLACE - NIGHT

Eddy pulls up in front of the Townhouse, screeching to a halt. Lefty bolts out of the car. The ambulance is already there. The PARAMEDICS are working on Ace. The Princess runs up to Lefty.

PRINCESS

They ambushed us.

The Paramedics put Ace on a stretcher and are lifting it as Lefty rushes to Ace.

PARAMEDIC

Can you stand back, please.

The Paramedics roll Ace toward the ambulance, Lefty's on their heels. They load him in to the back and start to close the doors. Lefty puts his hand on the door.

LEFTY

I'm coming with you.

Before the Paramedics can object, Lefty is on board. He turns to Eddy, Hilda, The Princess, Izzie and Crew.

LEFTY (CONT'D)

Follow us there.

INT. AMBULANCE - CONTINUOUS

PARAMEDICS attach an IV to Ace, while weaving through traffic.

Lefty is panicing, places his hand close to Ace's nose and mouth to see if he's breathing. When he hears...

ACE

Will you please get your goddamn hand out of my face?

Lefty pulls his hand back, a smile comes to his face...

LEFTY

Ace...

Ace tries to look down at his wounds, grimaces.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

ACE

Those bastards can't kill this Irishman.

LEFTY

Don't talk, Ace.

ACE

You're going to need to take someone with you tomorrow.

LEFTY

I'm not going without you.

ACE

Don't piss me off, or I'll die right here in front of you. You're going to the Biazarro. Now who are you taking with you as an adviser?

LEFTY

I can't do it.

Ace reaches over, grabs Lefty's hand...

ACE

Lefty, twenty years ago. Two new players were favored to play in the Biazarro, me and your father.

Lefty is stunned..

LEFTY

What?

ACE

Your father was one of the best players in the world. You were just a baby, not even a year old. Your mother wanted him to stop playing and settle down, raise his new family. So he quit. But, I convince him to take a shot at the Biazarro so he could maybe retire a rich man. We made a deal that if either one of us got in and won we'd split the money. Your Mother protested, but she finally agreed. Your father put everything he had into getting to that table, all his money, his time, his heart and soul. We were almost there, had beaten everyone we needed to beat, when we were set up. We'd taken a big money game, no poker masters, just men with a lot of money. They had no idea how good me and your Father were.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

ACE (CONT'D)

We took them for close to a million dollars. Then someone said we cheated. One of the Men pulled out a gun. I went crazy. Nobody pulls a gun on me. By the time I got to him, he had shot me three times. I finally got the gun away and beat him with it 'till I blacked out. That Man was Stan Kondor's father. Word got back to the Poker Masters that your Father and I had cheated, then killed a man, we both were blackballed. Your Father lost everything. He had spent all his savings to live and play at that level. Now, his money and reputation were gone with mine. We couldn't play in any reputable games. I dropped out, left the country, your father moved upstate to Freno and never played again.

(beat)

One of the Men paying in the Biazarro this year is the Man who set us up. You have to sit at that table, win or lose you have to play.

Lefty sits, speechless, his mind racing, all the pieces of his life with his father falling into place, when...

EXT. ST. ANNE'S HOSPITAL - CONT.

The Ambulance pulls up, the doors fly open, Ace's gurney is lowered. Lefty runs behind the speeding gurney.

PARAMEDIC

Back away from the gurney, sir.

The gurney explodes through the double doors.

INT. ST. ANNE'S HOSPITAL - CONT.

Lefty follows the gurney down the corridor as far as he can before it disappears through another set of doors. He turns to see Izzie, Eddy, Jimmy, Manny and The Princess coming through the main entrance.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. WAITING ROOM - LATER

Lefty, The Princess, Izzie, Jimmy, Manny, Hilda and Eddy all wait for word.

DISSOLVE TO:

Lefty, The Princess, Izzie, Jimmy, Manny, Hilda and Eddy still waiting...

DISSOLVE TO:

Lefty, The Princess, Izzie, Jimmy, Manny, Hilda and Eddy asleep in different positions still waiting...

DISSOLVE TO:

Lefty standing alone as the others sleep. A heavysset NURSE walks past...

LEFTY

Excuse me...

She turns.

LEFTY (CONT'D)

Any word on how Mr. Ace White is doing?

NURSE

Are you a friend of Mr. White's?

Lefty nods. The Nurse takes a moment to answer.

NURSE (CONT'D)

He's still in surgery - just pray.

LEFTY

What does that mean?

The Nurse merely shakes her head and starts away again.

LEFTY (CONT'D)

IS HE GONNA DIE?

She turns an "shhhh's" Lefty. This wakes up The Princess, Manny, Izzie and Crew. They come to Lefty.

MANNY

What's wrong.

Lefty is crumbling.

LEFTY

Anybody know any of Ace's relatives?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

IZZIE

We're it. Wife left him twenty years ago, took the kid.

THE PRINCESS

Why? What the Nurse say?

LEFTY

Pray...

The Princess starts to cry. They all hold each other.

LEFTY (CONT'D)

He wanted me to play the Biazarro but I don't know how I can do it.

THE PRINCESS

You've got to, Lefty. We'll stay with him.

MANNY

If he dies, he'd turn over in his grave, if you didn't play. And if he lives, he'll make sure you're turning over in yours... 'cause he's gonna kill ya.

WE HOLD on Lefty.

INT. BROWNSTONE - LEFTY'S BEDROOM - MORNING

Lefty is packing. Hilda enters.

HILDA

Mr. White wanted me to be sure to give you this before you departed.

Hilda is holding a small package. Lefty looks at Hilda inquisitively, takes the package, opening it on the bed.

Inside is a manila envelope with Lefty's name on it. He opens the envelope, inside Ace has left a stack of cash, a rabbit's foot, and a folded slip of paper.

LEFTY

Hilda, when did Ace leave this?

HILDA

When you where injured and still in the hospital, sir.

He unfolds the paper, it reads...

Meet'em, greet'em, jam'em and beat'em.

On the bottom of the paper is a phone number. Lefty's eyes drift off, his mind racing...

EXT. OCEAN - NIGHT

An expansive AERIAL SHOT of the SEA. In the distance we see an enormous YACHT magnificently lit by the full moon's light. As we move across the sea's turbulent beauty, on the horizon we see the lights of a helicopter coming into view. The helicopter grows larger as it approaches, finally hovering over the yacht before descending to a helicopter pad on the top deck.

A CREW MEMBER opens the door to the helicopter and out steps Lefty, wearing a tuxedo. The Crew Member reaches and takes the hand of the next person, out steps Lefty's FATHER, Lester Wilson Sr., also wearing a tuxedo. They are greeted by another CREW MEMBER and escorted below.

INT. THE BIG BIAZARRO SUITE - CONT.

Lefty and Lester Sr. enter a room of incredible beauty, dark wood, Persian Rugs, a mansion on water. In the center of the room sits an antique poker table.

Standing around the room in a large circle, with Sporados in the center, are all twenty-seven poker masters. They look up when Lefty and his Father enter the room, then begin to applaud. Sporados steps forward and hands them a glass of champagne. Sporados lifts his glass. The other Masters follow...

SPORADOS

To our newest Poker Master.
Lester "Lefty" Wilson. Welcome to
the Big Biazarro.

Everyone drinks to Lefty.

LEFTY

Thank you. Thank you, all very
much.

As Lefty gives "thanks," Lester Sr. looks around the room and locks eyes with a Man standing in the circle, George Palmer Deeds. Sporados gathers the crowd.

SPORADOS

Before we begin, gentlemen, you
may take a moment with your
advisors.

Lefty looks to his Father, sees him staring, feels the tension, follows his gaze to Deeds. He touches his Father's arm, pulls him away.

LEFTY

Forget it, dad. We're here.

Lester Sr. turns to Lefty, they hug long and hard, then pull apart.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

FATHER

I'm proud of you, son. I'm so proud of you I just wish Ace coulda been here to share this with you. But, I'm gonna give you one piece of advice Ace gave me awhile back... And no truer words have ever been spoken when it comes to this game; "If you don't feel it, don't play it."

Lester Sr. wraps his arms around Lefty again.

FATHER (CONT'D)

Now meet 'em, greet 'em, jam 'em and beat 'em.

Sporados makes a motion for the six chosen Players to move to the table. Sporados directs each player to a seat. He walks behind each seated player as he speaks.

SPORADOS

This is the thirtieth year of the Biazarro. We are proud to have done a great deal to raise the level of the game of poker. There have been many exciting and legendary moments over these past years. However, there have also been moments we have not been proud of. I would like to take this time to acknowledge one of those moments and the people affected by it... Twenty years ago two men were banned from the Biazarro for dishonorable play. I would like to apologize for too hastily taking the word of one of our own, without further scrutiny, because it has recently come to light that they were wrongly accused. Tonight I'd like to remedy the wrongs of the past.

He stops behind George Palmer Deeds.

SPORADOS (CONT'D)

Will you rise Mr. Deeds.

Deeds looks back over his shoulder at Sporados, puzzled, but stands.

SPORADOS (CONT'D)

I would like to welcome Lester Wilson Sr. to the Big Biazarro by giving you the seat of the man who stole your place at this table twenty years ago.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

All eyes turn to Lester, there is great rumbling from the surrounding Poker Masters as they look from Deeds to Lester. Deeds is outraged.

DEEDS

What in the hell are you doing?

SPORADOS

Step away from the table George.

Deeds reluctantly steps away. Lester steps forward.

MR. WILSON

I am honored to finally get the chance to sit at this table, especially with my son, but this wouldn't be complete without Ace White, who you all are aware is in the hospital tonight recovering from surgery. So if you don't mind I'll just advise my son how to win this thing. And wait 'till me and Ace can sit at this table together.

The Poker Masters applaud.

SPORADOS

Fair enough.

Sporados turns to Deeds.

SPORADOS (CONT'D)

Can someone see that Mr. Deeds is taken to shore, he is no longer welcome here.

Deeds is escorted away. Sporados lifts his champagne glass again.

SPORADOS (CONT'D)

Our thoughts and prayers go out to Ace White, who God willing will one day join us at the Big Biazarro.

Sporados walks over and throws his champagne glass into the fireplace, Lester walks over and does the same. Lefty follows. One by one, each Poker Master walks over and throws his glass into the fire place in honor of Ace.

Sporados crosses back to the poker table.

SPORADOS (CONT'D)

Gentlemen, let's play cards.

Sporados sits. Lefty and the other Masters move to their respective places and take their seats.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (3)

Lefty looks around, taking in the moment, takes a breath, internalizing the feeling. He's a Poker Master, sitting at the Big Blazarro. He looks over at his Father, smiles, looks at Deeds' empty chair, thinks about Ace.

We start a SLOW PUSH IN on Lefty.

Sporados begins to state the rules.

SPORADOS (CONT'D)
The game will be five-card stud only. The buy-in is one million dollars with no reprieve...

The PUSH IN continues - as the SOUND of Sporados voice begins to fade into the background.

SPORADOS (CONT'D)
You lose the million, you lose the match. You will be allowed two break calls per day.

The PUSH IN - becomes Sporados' HAND as he breaks the seal on the deck and starts to shuffle. He places the deck on the table. Another hand comes in from his right and cuts...

SPORADOS (CONT'D)
If the match has not been decided by twelve noon, we will recess and begin again at midnight...

The PUSH IN continues - as he deals the cards...

SPORADOS (CONT'D)
Do you agree?

WE HEAR a loud moan from the group, as we watch the next series of card being dealt face up.

WE PAN UP from the hand dealing the cards...

REVEALING ACE WHITE, sitting in his hospital gown at a crappy felt card table in the hospital rec. room.

ACE
Oh!!! You were so close.

He's surrounded by several other PATIENTS, also in hospital gowns, some still attached to their IV BAG as they sit at the table. All are wearing New Years' party hats. They are moaning over their loss, as Ace takes their money.

GROUP
One more! One more! One more!

Ace raises his hands...

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (4)

ACE
Okay, okay. We got time for one
more...

FADE TO BLACK.

THE CRAWL...

LEFTY WILSON WON THE BIG BIAZARRO THAT YEAR AND THE NEXT.

THE THIRD YEAR - HE LOST TO ACE WHITE.

THE FOURTH YEAR - ACE WHITE LOST TO LESTER WILSON SR. -
AKA - "LUCKY LESTER."