

Where God Left His Shoes

by
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FADE IN:

INT. JOHN'S BOXING GYM - DAY

CLOSE ON - the feet of TWO BOXERS as they work on the focus pads in the middle of the ring. The CAMERA RISES UP to reveal...

FRANK DIAZ - 32, tough, handsome in a rugged, street way - works the pads with another BOXER. Frank's quick and nimble on his feet. Focused. Working up a serious sweat.

HECTOR - a trainer - walks through the gym, ad libbing comments to each fighter on their technique. Hector makes his way over to the ring. He steps up on the apron.

HECTOR
Frank, got a minute.

Frank stops his routine, steps over to Hector.

HECTOR (CONT'D)
Just got off the phone with the
promotor for the December fight at
the Garden - they're pulling you
from the card.

Frank eyes Hector. Shocked.

FRANK
What? Why?

HECTOR
Come on Frank, you know why.
(a beat)
Nothing I can do.

Hector walks away. Frank returns to his focus pad routine with a lot more on his mind.

INT. LOCKER ROOM - JOHN'S GYM - DAY

Frank, alone, slowly cleans out his locker, placing his belongings into a gym bag. He slams his locker closed. A poster of his upcoming fight is on the wall over his locker. He exits. Hold on the poster.

EXT. JOHN'S BOXING GYM - DAY

Frank exits the gym. Gym bag slung over his shoulders. Boxing shoes slung over his other shoulder, he puts his army hood jacket, inscribed with his name "Diaz" on it,

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

over his head and walks toward the elevated train station in the near distance.

INT. ELEVATED TRAIN CAR - SUNSET

Frank sits on the train, pensive, staring at New York City's majestic skyline across the river.

EXT. NEW YORK/BRONX - ESTABLISHING SHOTS - SUNSET

The trees have shed their leaves in preparation of winter's arrival. ESTABLISHING SHOTS of Frank walking through the Bronx, capture the New York that I know.

There's a lyrical beauty to the isolated pockets of Manhattan's outerborough, where there still remains a feeling of realness and complicated simplicity, where gentrification has yet to reach.

EXT. FRANK'S APARTMENT BUILDING - SUNSET

As Frank walks toward his apartment building in a run down section of the Bronx, TWO KIDS run out of a building and knock into Frank. The boxing shoes slung over his shoulder fall off. The kids run off, thinking nothing of it.

Frank picks up the shoes, looks up at the phone line above him, then hurls the shoes into the air.

The shoes laces twirl around the phone line and remain hanging up there.

Frank continues on his way, entering the building.

INT. KITCHEN - FRANK'S APARTMENT - HOUSING PROJECT - NIGHT

ANGELA DIAZ - 29, under her tired eyes is a beautiful woman - prepares dinner for her family. Frank sits at the kitchen table with his head in his hands. There's a look of uncertainty and fear in his eyes.

Angela spoons out food onto four plates. The scraping sound of the spoon on the empty pot is deafening.

She rations out macaroni and cheese onto four dishes. However, by the time she gets to the fourth dish, she realizes she doesn't have enough. Frustrated, she takes from the first three dishes and rations out an even portion into the fourth dish.

ANGELA

They can't do that, you had a contract.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

FRANK

They can do whatever they want.

ANGELA

You can sue them.

FRANK

I can't sue anyone.

CHRISTINA - 7, innocent as can be - comes running into the kitchen.

CHRISTINA

Ma, Justin hit me.

JUSTIN - 11, adorable - enters, ready to refute.

JUSTIN

Did not! She's lying!

CHRISTINA

Did too!

Angela reprimands Justin in Spanish.

Christina hits Justin.

JUSTIN

You see that!

ANGELA

The two of you - go wash up and get ready for dinner.

JUSTIN

But she just-

Angela yells at Justin in Spanish.

Justin and Christina exit. As they exit, Justin shoves Christina. She retaliates by pulling his hair. Angela and Frank alone once again.

ANGELA

What did Hector say? Can he call someone or do something?

FRANK

I'm not working with Hector anymore. I cleaned out my locker at the gym.

A long beat.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

ANGELA

Whatta we gonna do? We were
counting on that money. I'm behind
on everything - the phone, the-

FRANK

I'll figure something out.

Angela shakes her head in disbelief, turns the water on and
scrubs the pots vigorously.

INT. DINNER TABLE - FRANK'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

Frank and Angela eat dinner with Justin and Christina.
Christina has her finger pointed right at Justin's face,
annoying him. Frank, head down, eats slowly. His mind
elsewhere.

JUSTIN

Get your finger out of my face.

Christina doesn't budge.

JUSTIN (CONT'D)

Ma, tell her to stop, she's been
bothering me all day.

ANGELA

Just ignore her...You go to
basketball tryouts today?

JUSTIN

No.

ANGELA

Why not?

JUSTIN

Cause I don't wanna play
basketball, I wanna play football.

ANGELA

Tell him that he's gonna get hurt
if he plays football. Tell him he
should play basketball.

FRANK

(repeating)

You should play basketball.

ANGELA

That's just the enthusiasm he
needs.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

FRANK

Whatta you want me to say?

ANGELA

I want you to encourage him.

FRANK

I would, but honestly, he can't shoot hoops.

ANGELA

Why not?

FRANK

He dribbles the ball like he's retarded.

ANGELA

You're supposed to be supportive.

FRANK

I am. I'm supporting the truth. He can't dribble. He sucks.

JUSTIN

I can dribble.

FRANK

No you can't.

JUSTIN

Yes I can.

FRANK

Christina dribbles better than you.

JUSTIN

Can I box?

FRANK

Box? Box what? Oranges?

ANGELA

You're not fighting. Get that outta your head.

JUSTIN

Why not?

ANGELA

Because I said so.

Justin looks at Frank.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

FRANK

Don't look at me. You throw a
punch like you dribble, you won't
see thirteen.

JUSTIN

(really low)

Can't be worse than you.

FRANK

What did you say?

JUSTIN

Nothing.

FRANK

What did you-

Suddenly, the lights go out.

FRANK (CONT'D)

Jesus Christ. What now? Nobody
move.

Frank rises. We hear him move through the dark to the front
door. He opens the door. A flood of light enters. Frank
looks down the hallway. All the lights are on.

ANGELA

(to Frank)

Check the fuse box?

Frank opens the fuse box behind the door. Checks it.

FRANK

You pay Con Ed?

A beat.

ANGELA

You wanna do this in front of the
kids right now?

Frank slams the front door shut. Darkness once again. We
hear Frank move through the apartment.

Light appears when Angela lights some candles.

CHRISTINA

I'm scared. Can you turn on the
lights?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (3)

FRANK

There's nothing to be scared of
sweetie. We're all right here.

A beat. Christina is still scared and Frank can see it.

FRANK (CONT'D)

The dark is a lotta fun. Wanna
see?

Christina nods her head "yes."

FRANK (CONT'D)

Justin, take that potato in your
dish and throw it at me.

Justin eyes Frank, confused.

JUSTIN

What?

FRANK

Throw it at me.

JUSTIN

I'll get in trouble. I get in
trouble for everything.

FRANK

You're not gonna get in trouble.
Now throw it. Aim for my mouth.

ANGELA

What are you doing?

FRANK

Playing a game.

ANGELA

What game is that?

FRANK

Watch and learn.

(to Justin)

Go ahead, see if you can get it in
my mouth.

Justin takes a small potato from his dish and aims at Frank.

ANGELA

You're cleaning this up, you know
that?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (4)

FRANK

Yeah, yeah.

Justin throws the potato at Frank, and Frank catches it in his mouth. Christina laughs.

FRANK (CONT'D)

That's one for me. Now it's Mom's turn.

ANGELA

I ain't playing this game.

FRANK

You don't have a choice. Now get ready. Concentrate.

ANGELA

Don't you dare throw that potato at me.

Frank tosses the potato at Angela. Hits her in the head. Christina and Justin burst out laughing.

FRANK

(smiles)

My bad. I aimed too high.

ANGELA

Sure you did.

FRANK

Scout's honor.

ANGELA

My turn.

Angela takes her potato and throws it right back at Frank - hitting him in the head.

Christina and Justin laugh again.

FRANK

(to Christina)

Oh, you thought that was funny?

CHRISTINA

Uh huh.

FRANK

Really? How funny is this?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (5)

Frank tickles Christina who bursts out laughing. Frank glances at Angela. She smiles. Frank smiles back. Winks. Justin sees the wink and smiles. All seems okay...

FADE TO BLACK:

OVER BLACK

The sounds of LAUGHTER transform into sounds of CRYING and YELLING. There's confusion. Chaos. It sounds scary.

FRANK (O.S.) (CONT'D)
I ain't leaving! You want me outta
here, you're gonna have to drag me
out!

ANGELA (O.S.)
(pleading)
Frank, calm down.

FRANK (O.S.)
Come on! Come throw me out!

FADE IN:

INT. FRANK'S APARTMENT - LIVING ROOM - DAY

Total chaos. Frank paces back and forth, fuming.

ANGELA
Calm down.

FRANK
Don't tell me to calm down!

Angela stands in front of him, blocking the path to the door where...

A frightened LANDLORD stands in the doorway - next to an EVICTION MARSHAL - holding the eviction papers, smoking a cigarette. He could care less. Nor is he frightened.

Justin stands motionless. He is dressed in football uniform, holding his helmet in his hand. It's Halloween.

Christina stands next to him, clutching a doll in her arms. Scared to death. She's dressed in a Princess costume.

FRANK (CONT'D)
We're only two months behind,
that's all! Where's your heart!
You have kids! Imagine someone
throwing you outta your home!

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

The Landlord lowers his head, ashamed he has to do this.

EVICTION MARSHAL

You have two hours to pack up your stuff.

FRANK

You shut your mouth! No one's talking to you.

EVICTION MARSHAL

I don't have all day.

Frank moves at the Marshal to attack, but Angela uses all of her strength to stop him.

Christina cries louder.

ANGELA

Honey, please! Don't do this!

JUSTIN

Mom.

Frank continues to pace, cursing in Spanish.

JUSTIN (CONT'D)

Mom...Mom...

ANGELA

What? Whatta you want?!!!

JUSTIN

Christina wet herself.

Close on - Christina's bottoms have a big wet spot.

Angela lifts Christina into her arms.

ANGELA

(to Justin)

Go pack up your stuff...Your clothes, not your toys.

Justin exits.

Angela, holding Christina, eyes Frank.

Off Frank, seething.

INT. JUSTIN'S BEDROOM - DAY

Justin crams all his clothes into a bag. He leaves a little room for...a football and a few other toys. He stuffs them in and tries his best to zip up the full bag.

INT. FRANK AND ANGELA'S BEDROOM - DAY

Christina changes into dry clothes.

Angela packs her clothes into a large suitcase. It's full. She zips it up. Then, she takes the photos of her and their family (wedding photos, etc.) Off the dresser and put them in a large hand bag.

Frank stands next to her, putting his boxing trophies into a duffel bag.

CHRISTINA
I don't wanna leave.

ANGELA
We're going somewhere better
sweetie. Zip up your jacket. It's
cold outside.

Frank grabs his army jacket and puts it on.

FRANK
(to Angela)
Ready?

A beat. No response. Angela lifts Christina, who is clutching onto her doll. Angela grabs the hand bag of photos and exits. Frank, in tow, exits with the bag of trophies and their suitcase full of clothes.

OMITTED

OMITTED

OMITTED

OMITTED

EXT. FRANK'S APARTMENT BUILDING - DAY

Frank, Angela, Justin and Christina exit the building with the last of their possessions. Frank is carrying his trophies, Angela is carrying the photos, Justin is pulling his suitcase and Christina is carrying her doll.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

They walk to Frank's car, which is filled to capacity with their belongings.

PEOPLE in Halloween costumes walk by, trick or treating.

They all cram into the car with the boxes, bags and suitcases. Frank tries to stuff his trophies into the car, but he can't find any room.

Finally, Frank gives up and tosses the bag of trophies into a pile of garbage bags beside the car.

Frank gets into the driver's side, starts the car, then drives away.

OMITTED

EXT. DINER - NIGHT

People in Halloween costumes walk by the diner. Frank's car is parked right outside.

INT. DINER - NIGHT

Halloween decorations hang throughout the diner. Halloween music plays. In the background, we see the car.

Christina and Justin, still in their costumes, go through an assortment of candy. Christina's doll is on the table also. There are two chocolate shakes and cheese fries on the table.

Angela counts a small wad of money.

FRANK
How much do we have?

ANGELA
Two hundred twenty nine.

FRANK
I can sell the car. Probably get
eight or nine hundred for it.

ANGELA
I can start looking for a job
tomorrow.

FRANK
Who's gonna take care of Christina?
We can't afford day care.

A beat.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

ANGELA

Where we gonna go?

FRANK

We'll go to a hotel tonight and figure it out in the morning.

ANGELA

Maybe we can go live with your cousin Benny?

FRANK

No way I'm bringing them there. His windows been shot out twice.

A long beat. Frank and Angela, pensive.

ANGELA

What if I called Luis?

Frank eyes Angela. As does Justin.

ANGELA (CONT'D)

I'm just throwing out every possibility.

(realizing mistake)

I'm sorry. That was wrong.

A WAITRESS dressed in a Halloween costume walks bye.

FRANK

Miss, can I get the check?

ANGELA

(to Frank)

I said I'm sorry.

FRANK

It's fine. Forget it.

The waitress approaches the table.

WAITRESS

Everything okay here?

FRANK

Everything's great. What's the damage?

The waitress adds up the bill. She sets the check down on the table.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

WAITRESS

You owe sixteen pumpkins.

FRANK

Sixteen, that's a lot of pumpkins.
How much were the shakes?

WAITRESS

Five dollars each.

FRANK

Five dollars? And the fries?

WAITRESS

\$3.95.

FRANK

(adding)
Five and five and four. That's
fourteen.

WAITRESS

Uhm. And tax.

FRANK

Tax. Who can forget the
government?

A bell in the background rings. Food order ready.

WAITRESS

(uncomfortable)
Excuse me one second. I'll be
right back.

The waitress walks away.

FRANK

(to Angela)
Gimme some cash for-

Frank notices Angela wiping tears from her eyes. Frank
rises. He gently pulls her away from the the kids.

FRANK (CONT'D)

Look, this ain't easy on either of
us, but we gotta make a pact. We
gotta be strong. No crying in
front of the kids.

Angela composes herself and wipes her tears away.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (3)

ANGELA

I'm okay. I'm just tired.

FRANK

Look, the best thing for us to do right now is to stay together and figure this out as a family. You know that, right?

ANGELA

I know.

Angela lowers her head.

FRANK

We're gonna make it.

(a beat)

Look at me.

Angela looks up at Frank.

FRANK (CONT'D)

We're gonna make it. I promise.

Frank kisses her. Comforting.

FRANK (CONT'D)

Let's pay the bill and go get some sleep.

ANGELA

I'll take care of it. Put the kids in the car. I just need a minute alone.

FRANK

Okay.

Frank turns to Justin and Christina.

FRANK (CONT'D)

Come on, let's go. That's enough with the candy. Your teeth are gonna fall out.

Frank ushers Justin and Christina out of the diner, leaving her doll on the table.

Angela puts her jacket on. Then, she grabs a glass of water and drinks. She looks at the bill. Then, she looks up at...

The Waitress is occupied with taking the order of another table.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (4)

Angela sets the bill down, grabs her purse and exits quickly without paying the bill, leaving the doll behind.

FADE TO BLACK:

TITLE CARD - DECEMBER 23RD

EXT. BRONX STREETS - MORNING

It's cold. Bluish gray. Fall is gone and winter is upon us. A cold snap has set in over New York. SHOTS of the downtrodden section of the Bronx known as Hunt's Point.

Frank walks past 7 HOMELESS PEOPLE laying under a bridge. Their carts, packed with bottles and cans, are parked in the corner.

EXT. KOSCUSKO BRIDGE - MORNING

TEN MEN stand under a bridge around a burning barrel of fire trying to keep warm. One of the men is...

Frank - he looks even more beat up and tired. He's wearing his army jacket, trying to stay warm.

A van pulls under the bridge and up to the men. The logo on the van says, "Manosolo Construction."

Two Italian men, VINNY, 28, and his father ALDO, 60, step out. Vinny is on his cell phone, talking loudly.

VINNY

(into phone)

Ten pounds of calamari should be enough...Honey, I can't talk right now. I gotta go to work to pay for the house I bought you.

The ten men, including Frank, gather around Vinny and Aldo. All are looking for work.

Vinny closes his phone, then announces...

VINNY (CONT'D)

We only need five today. You.
You. You. You. And you.

The last person picked is Frank. The five chosen men climb into the van. Frank walks over to Vinny.

FRANK

Thank you.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Vinny doesn't acknowledge his sincerity. He just gets back into the van.

EXT. QUEEN'S HOUSE - DAY

Like chattel, Frank, and four other men, slave away paving the front of an opulent home in the upscale section of the Bronx.

Frank wheels an enormous barrel of bricks up the driveway. Top heavy, the barrel falls over. A few of the bricks break in two. Vinny marches over to Frank.

VINNY

Whatta you doing?

FRANK

Sorry.

Vinny rolls his eyes, angry, no patience.

Frank quickly picks up the bricks.

EXT. STOOP - QUEEN'S HOUSE - LUNCH BREAK

Frank sits on the stoop with the other workers. It's lunch time. Vinny, holding a bag of sandwiches, walks over to the men and throws the bag of food at them as if they were savages.

VINNY

Fifteen minutes. That's it. We gotta get this driveway paved.

Frank and the men each grab a sandwich out of the bag and begin to devour their food. Frank eats like he hasn't been fed in days. There's something sad about it.

EXT. KOSKUSCO BRIDGE - BRONX - LATER DAY

The Construction van pulls into the same area under the bridge where they picked up Frank and the other men.

The doors slide open. Frank, the other workers and Vinny step out of the van. Aldo stays in the driver's seat.

Vinny pulls money out of his pocket. One by one he pays all of the men. He pays Frank last. He hands him a fifty dollar bill.

FRANK

You usually pay seventy five.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

VINNY

What about the bricks you dropped?
You expect me to pay for those?

FRANK

I broke ten bricks. How much are
bricks, fifty cents each?

VINNY

You want the fifty or not?

FRANK

I'm just saying ten bricks at fifty
cents is what - do the math.

VINNY

Know what, I don't got time for
this. Take the seventy five, just
don't expect me to hire you again.

A beat.

VINNY (CONT'D)

Your choice. Whatta you want?

Frank takes the fifty out of Vinny's hand.

VINNY (CONT'D)

There's a smart man if I ever saw
one.

FRANK

Any work in the next few days?

VINNY

Maybe you haven't seen the lights
and the decorations all over the
place, but it's Christmas.

Vinny turns away and gets back into the van.

Frank walks off into the cold.

EXT. MOST PRECIOUS BLOOD HOMELESS SHELTER - BRONX - DAY

Frank enters a run down homeless shelter.

INT. MOST PRECIOUS BLOOD HOMELESS SHELTER - BRONX - DAY

Soiled mattresses are crammed together. HOMELESS PEOPLE
maneuver around the room. Most of them are sketchy looking.
Either drug addicts or mentally impaired.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Even though it's the day before Christmas, there is no spirit to be found, except where...

Angela (looks a little more beat up since we last saw her) decorates a pathetic Christmas tree with cheap Christmas ornaments, trying to instill some spirit. It's not working.

Frank walks up behind Angela and kisses her on the neck.

Angela pulls away. She turns. Sees Frank.

ANGELA

Oh. Hey. You scared me.

FRANK

Whatta you doing?

ANGELA

Trying to bring a little spirit to this place.

FRANK

You're doing a great job.
Where's are Justin and Christina?

ANGELA

Justin's playing football with some friends - Christina's right there on her mattress playing with some toys the salvation army dropped off.

INT. CHRISTINA'S MATTRESS - SHELTER - SAME

Christina, runny nose, is playing with some blocks on a mattress in the back of the shelter.

A shady looking homeless man, known in the shelter as SMIDDY, sits on the edge of the mattress playing with Christina. His insidious eyes are all we need to see to know he is up to no good.

SMIDDY

And that block goes over here.

Frank arrives, immediately sensing bad intentions. Frank grabs Christina and picks her up into his arms.

FRANK

Hey sweetie, who's your friend?

CHRISTINA

That's Smiddy.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Smiddy stands up, sensing Frank's hostility.

FRANK
Smiddy, huh?

SMIDDY
Hi.

FRANK
Get lost.

If Frank's eyes were guns, Smiddy would be dead. And Smiddy knows it. Frank glares at Smiddy, who smartly walks away.

FRANK (CONT'D)
(to Christina)
Honey, if that man comes over to
you again, you go see Mom. Okay?

CHRISTINA
Are you mad at me?

FRANK
No I'm not mad at you. It's just
you can't talk to strangers...Okay?

CHRISTINA
Okay.

Frank kisses Christina on the forehead and sets her back down on the mattress.

INT. FRANK AND ANGELA'S MATTRESS - SHELTER - LATER NIGHT

Frank, Angela, Justin and Christina prepare to go to bed on two mattresses beside a radiator. All of their possessions are in the corner next to their mattress.

Frank takes his wallet and shoves it down his pants.

Angela zip locks their toothbrushes in a clear bag.

Justin takes off his sneakers.

ANGELA
(to Justin)
Put your sneakers under your
mattress.

JUSTIN
I know.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Justin puts his sneakers under the mattress and lays down. Angela lays down next to him. She puts the zip lock bag in between them and pulls the blanket over them.

Frank lays down on the adjacent mattress with Christina. He covers her only with the blanket, and uses his army jacket for his own warmth.

ANGELA
Good night.

FRANK
Night.

Like refugees, they go to sleep.

EXT. SKYLINE TRANSITION - NIGHT TO DAY

An aerial shot of Manhattan from the Bronx as night gives way to dawn.

TITLE CARD - December 24th - Christmas Eve

INT. FRANK AND ANGELA'S MATTRESS - SHELTER - MORNING

Frank slowly awakens. His jacket is missing. He realizes it. He looks around the immediate area. Frank taps Angela awake.

FRANK
Ange. Wake up.

ANGELA
I'm sleeping. What?

FRANK
My jacket. It's gone.

Angela opens her eyes.

ANGELA
What?

FRANK
Jesus Christ. You believe this?

Frank rises from the mattress.

ANGELA
Where are you going?

Frank doesn't answer.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

ANGELA (CONT'D)

Frank, don't do something stupid.

Frank marches away. Angela sighs.

INT. MOST PRECIOUS BLOOD HOMELESS SHELTER - MORNING

Frank walks through the shelter. Most of the people are sleeping. He bends down and checks under a HOMELESS MAN'S blanket - but the man is not wearing Frank's jacket.

INT. DIRECTOR'S OFFICE - MOST PRECIOUS BLOOD SHELTER - DAY

The SHELTER DIRECTOR sits at her desk working.

Frank appears in the doorway. He knocks.

FRANK

Hi. Someone stole my jacket last night. I'd like to file a report.

SHELTER DIRECTOR

Are you Frank Diaz?

FRANK

Yeah.

SHELTER DIRECTOR

I was just about to come and find you. We need to talk. Have a seat.

INT. FRANK AND ANGELA'S MATTRESS - SHELTER - DAY

Angela, Justin and Christina are huddled next to a radiator, wrapped in thin blankets. Christina's nose is running - she sneezes. Angela wipes her nose.

Frank walks back over to his family.

ANGELA

Did you find it?

He stands there.

FRANK

You're never gonna believe this.

ANGELA

What's wrong?

FRANK

We're leaving the shelter.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

ANGELA

What? Why?

FRANK

Remember that apartment list I put
us on two months ago?

ANGELA

Yeah.

FRANK

We just got called.

Angela and Justin beam with jubilation and surprise.

ANGELA

You're kidding?

FRANK

Nope. I have to go visit the
property manager in an hour. Looks
like we'll be spending Christmas in
our own apartment after all.

Angela throws her arms around Frank, hugging him.

ANGELA

Oh, thank God!

FRANK

I told you we'd be okay.

CHRISTINA

Is Santa Claus gonna come this
year?

JUSTIN

There's no Santa Claus. Think
about it stupid - how can someone
go to everyone's house in the world
in one night?

FRANK

Shut up, they have elves and
helpers and stuff.

JUSTIN

No they don't. No such thing.

Frank grabs Justin by the collar and pulls him to the side.

FRANK

Whatta you doing?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

JUSTIN

I'm supporting the truth.

FRANK

(to Christina)

Don't listen to your brother. He
doesn't know his mouth from his
ass.

ANGELA

Sweetie, Santa Claus already came.
The apartment is our Christmas
present.

CHRISTINA

I want my doll back.

Angela eyes Frank.

FRANK

I'll call Santa and see what else
he can do.

(to Angela)

I should get going.

ANGELA

Take Justin with you. I have to
take Christina to the clinic, then
I'll come back and pack everything
up.

JUSTIN

I can stay here.

FRANK

You're coming with me. Bundle up.

ANGELA

What about you? You can't go out
without a jacket.

FRANK

I'm going a few blocks to the
subway and a few blocks to the
building. I'll be fine.

ANGELA

So, I guess I'll see you back here
in a couple of hours?

FRANK

With the keys to our new apartment.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (3)

Angela hugs Frank tightly. A happiness in her eyes that we have yet to see from her.

EXT. MOST PRECIOUS BLOOD SHELTER - DAY

Frank, with no jacket on, and Justin exit the shelter. Justin immediately stops.

JUSTIN
Ah, it's freezing.

FRANK
Come on.

JUSTIN
Why can't I stay?

FRANK
Cause you can't. It's not safe.

JUSTIN
I can protect myself.

FRANK
You think you could protect yourself from a grown man?

JUSTIN
Hell yeah.

Justin pulls out a switchblade and shows it to his father. He holds it up as if he new how to use it.

JUSTIN (CONT'D)
Let someone try something.

In one swift move, Frank twists Justin's wrist. Frank takes the knife out of his hand, steps behind Justin and starts to choke him. Not to hurt him, but to prove a point. Justin falls to his knees.

FRANK
What are you gonna do now? Protect yourself, go ahead. Do something to show me you can take down a grown man and I'll let you stay. Come on tough guy, do something. Do it!
(a beat, Justin motionless)
That's what I thought.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Frank releases Justin. Justin gasps for air. Frank grabs Justin by the jacket and pulls him to his feet.

JUSTIN
You're an asshole.

Justin punches Frank in the arm. Frank ignores it as they walk on their way. Frank holds up the knife.

FRANK
Where did you get this?

JUSTIN
Give it back to me.

Frank puts the knife into his pocket. They walk off. A pep in their step.

INT. TURNSTILE - SUBWAY STATION - DAY

Frank and Justin enter a subway station. They walk toward the turnstiles.

FRANK
Under. Quick.

Justin eyes Frank, doesn't know if he should.

FRANK (CONT'D)
Go.

Justin ducks under the turnstile, not paying. Frank looks around and ducks under also.

EXT. POLO GROUNDS HOUSING PROJECT - DAY

Frank and Justin walk through the cold streets in a run down section of the Bronx. They cross a busy street and enter a building project complex.

INT. BUILDING OFFICE - POLO GROUNDS HOUSING PROJECT - DAY

Frank and Justin enter the office that regulates the entire project complex. It's a small five person office. They walk over to a SECRETARY who is wearing a Santa's hat.

FRANK
Hi. Merry Christmas. I'm Frank
Diaz. I'm here to see Carita about
an apartment.

SECRETARY
Last office on your right.

INT. PROJECT HALLWAY - POLO GROUNDS - DAY

Frank and Justin exit the elevator and follow Carita down the dirty hallway. There is a MAN laying on the floor. They cautiously step over him and continue on.

INT. APARTMENT - POLO GROUNDS - DAY

CARITA, a draconian property manager, is just as drab as the one bedroom apartment she is showing to Frank and Justin. It's small, but much cleaner than the shelter. Frank turns the faucet on in the kitchen. Running water.

Justin touches the radiator. He gives Frank the thumbs up. Frank turns to Carita.

CARITA
Well, this is it. Whatta you think?

FRANK
It ain't where God left his shoes,
but it'll do.

Frank stares out the cracked window.

INT. CARITA'S OFFICE - DAY

Carita hands Frank the application. Justin stands there waiting.

CARITA
Here you go. Fill this out.

FRANK
What's this?

CARITA
The application.

Frank looks troubled.

FRANK
Oh.

CARITA
Need a pen.

FRANK
Ah, yeah...I'm gonna fill this out
right outside. Excuse me a second.
(to Justin)
Come with me.

INT. BUILDING OFFICE - POLO GROUNDS HOUSING PROJECT - DAY

Frank and Justin exit Carita's office and sit down at a table. Frank pushes the application and pen to Justin.

FRANK
Fill that out for me.

JUSTIN
What?

FRANK
Fill it out.

JUSTIN
Why can't you do it?

FRANK
My hand still hurts from the last fight.
(insisting)
I said my hand hurts from the last fight. Now fill that out and whatever you don't know, ask me.

Just starts to fill out the application.

INT. CARITA'S OFFICE - DAY

Frank and Justin enter again. He hands the application to Carita. Along with a stack of crumpled twenty dollar bills.

FRANK
Here's the application and the four hundred dollar down payment. Actually, it's three ninety eight. I'll get you the two bucks in a day or two.

Frank and Justin sit anxiously across from Carita's desk as Carita reviews Frank's application for the apartment.

CARITA
You didn't fill out the employment section.

Carita hands the application back to Frank.

FRANK
I'm in between jobs. I'm a boxer.

Frank hands the application back to Carita.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

CARITA

One of the requirements in
qualifying for an apartment here is
that you have some form of income.

FRANK

I do. I work off the books.
Construction. It just hasn't been
that steady lately.

CARITA

Unfortunately, I can't put down
that you work off the books.

FRANK

I have a few jobs lined up right
after Christmas.

CARITA

That won't work. Management is
very strict. And since you don't
have a guaranteed form of income, I
can't process your application. I
have put you back on the list.

FRANK

What? What are you talking about?

CARITA

I can't give you the apartment
unless you're presently employed on
the books. Your name'll go back on
the list, and when another
apartment becomes available, I'll
contact you.

FRANK

Look, I live in a shelter with my
wife and kids. We can't wait
anymore.

CARITA

I'm sorry. I don't know what else
to tell you.

Frank tries to remain composed.

FRANK

I want you to tell me that
apartment's mine and we can move in
today.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

CARITA

I can't do that.

FRANK

Look, it's Christmas, gimme a break. I'll have a job by the first of the year.

CARITA

I'm sorry.

FRANK

So, that's it?

CARITA

There's nothing I can do. I have a family too, and if I put you through and get caught, I can lose my job.

FRANK

Justin, go wait for me outside.

Justin eyes Carita with contempt.

JUSTIN

Give her hell.

Justin exits. Frank and Carita are alone.

FRANK

Let me explain my situation. It's been a rough few months for me and my family. All we want is to spend Christmas in our own apartment. Now, I understand the position you're in, but imagine having your children sleep in a dirty shelter, on a cold floor for three months. Have a heart and give us a break.

CARITA

I understand your position. Many of the tenants who live here were in your shoes at one time or another. But like I said, there's nothing I can do.

FRANK

There's nothing you can do?

Frank is losing his patience.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (3)

FRANK (CONT'D)

Let me ask you something. How many tenants, who were in my shoes, went to the Gulf War and fought for this country?

CARITA

Excuse me.

FRANK

How many people went to war? It's a simple question. I went and fought for my country when was I was eighteen. So you're telling me that it was okay for me to risk my life for you and your family, but you won't put anything on the line for me and my family.

CARITA

It's not like that.

FRANK

It damn sure is like that.

Frank rises. Carita tries to find a solution.

CARITA

Wait - do you get a check from the government each month?

FRANK

No. I don't get anything. Not a dime.

A beat.

CARITA

Look, I leave the office at six tonight. If you can find a job by then, the apartment's yours. That's the best I can do. Otherwise, and I'm sorry, but I have to call the next person on the list.

Frank eyes the clock behind Carita.

CLOSE ON CLOCK - 9:30 AM

EXT. POLO GROUNDS HOUSING PROJECT - DAY

Frank and Justin march out of the project grounds with great urgency. Justin can barely keep up with Frank.

JUSTIN
(uneasy)
So, we didn't get it?

FRANK
No Einstein, we didn't get it. Not yet at least.

JUSTIN
Where are we going now?

FRANK
To get a job.

JUSTIN
Why?

FRANK
Cause I need a job to get the apartment.

JUSTIN
Why don't you tell her you have job and make something up?

FRANK
And what happens when she finds out I lied.

JUSTIN
We'll already have the keys.

FRANK
And we'll get thrown out of another apartment.

JUSTIN
But-

FRANK
No, that's stupid. Shut up and keep walking.

JUSTIN
You shut up. Don't tell me to shut up. I'm just trying to help.

EXT. BRONX STREET - DAY

Frank crosses the street against the light, but Justin doesn't follow because he doesn't think he can make it. A car drives by. Once the light changes, Justin runs across the street.

Frank jogs down into a subway station. Justin hurries and follows.

INT. TURNSTILE - SUBWAY STATION - DAY

Frank and Justin enter a Bronx subway station. They walk toward the turnstiles. Again, Justin ducks under the turnstile. Frank ducks under also.

INT. TRAIN CAR - SUBWAY - DAY

Frank and Justin sit in an empty car. Frank, stewing with anger, stares straight ahead. Justin rubs his stomach.

JUSTIN

I'm hungry.

FRANK

You shoulda ate at the shelter.

JUSTIN

Can I get something when we get off the train?

FRANK

All the money I got is for the apartment.

JUSTIN

I should've went with Mom.

Off Frank, pensive. A lot on his mind.

OMITTED

EXT. DYKER HEIGHTS STREETS - DAY

Frank and Justin walk through a neighborhood with huge, expensive, manicured houses all decorated in a lavish display of Christmas ornaments and lights.

EXT. LONGO HOUSE - DAY

The construction van that Frank was in the day before is parked in a driveway attached to a large, three family house.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

THREE KIDS, between the ages of 11 and 15, throw a football around on the front lawn. A FAMILY loads up their car with Christmas presents.

Frank and Justin walk up the steps of the house, which is decorated in Christmas ornaments and lights.

JUSTIN
Who lives here?

FRANK
Just ring the bell.

JUSTIN
What about "please?"

FRANK
What about you do what you're told.

Justin rings the bell. They wait. Then, the door opens.

Vinny opens the door in his tank top. He stares at Frank, surprised and pissed off.

VINNY
What are you doing here? I told ya
I got no work today!

FRANK
I know and I'm sorry to bother you,
but I need to speak to your father
for just a minute.

VINNY
Speak to him about what?

Aldo appears in the doorway behind Vinny, eating a plate of meatballs.

ALDO
Who is it?

Aldo sees Frank standing there.

FRANK
Hello Mr. Manosolo. Sorry to
bother you on Christmas Eve, but
there's something important I need
to talk about with you. You got a
minute?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

VINNY

He's busy right now. We're in the middle of making sauce.

ALDO

It's okay. Come in.

Aldo extends his arm, allowing Frank to enter. Vinny rolls his eyes, irritated by the inconvenience.

FRANK

Thank you.
(to Justin)
Wait out here.

JUSTIN

But it's cold.

Frank enters, leaving Justin outside.

INT. HALLWAY - LONGO HOUSE - DAY

Frank enters and follows Vinny and Aldo. He stares at the opulence. In the background, a woman prepares a table, laying out a spread of food. Christmas spirit everywhere.

INT. LONGO HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - DAY

Frank, Vinny and Aldo enter the lavish living room. Vinny takes a seat on the couch, grabs his beer and continues watching a football game. Aldo stands in the doorway.

Frank stands between them.

VINNY

What's this about - that you gotta bother us today?
(to TV)
Ah shit! How do you drop that pass? I knew I should've taken the Seahawks.

Frank turns to Aldo, who is paying attention.

FRANK

Me and my family live in a shelter.

VINNY

Whatta you homeless?

FRANK

(embarrassed)
Yeah.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

VINNY

You hungry or somethin'?

(to Aldo)

Da, give him a few meatballs and
get him outta here!

FRANK

I didn't come here for food.

ALDO

Here have a bite.

FRANK

No, I'm fine thank you.

ALDO

Here, my wife made two hundred of
them.

VINNY

It's an insult to turn down an
Italian woman's cooking.

Frank looks at Aldo, then takes the dish from Aldo and eats
the meatball.

FRANK

It's very good.

ALDO

If you want more-

FRANK

No, that was great. Hit the spot,
thank you.

A beat.

FRANK (CONT'D)

Look, I don't wanna take your
time...The reason I'm here is
because I'm a boxer and a few
months ago I got taken outta this
fight and money got tight and we
lost our apartment.

FRANK (CONT'D)

I thought I recognized you. You're
that guy who got his ass kicked by
Ceasar Rodriguez a few months back
at the Garden. Right?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

FRANK (CONT'D)

I lost the fight - yeah.

VINNY

You threw the towel in. I remember. I saw it on ESPN. Hey, you had a shot if you didn't quit. You caught him with a couple of good punches. I mean, he still beat your head in but you had a shot.

A beat.

FRANK

As I was saying, we've been living in this shelter, waiting for an apartment. Today we got a call and there's one available.

ALDO

How can we help you?

Frank turns to Aldo.

FRANK

See in order to qualify for this apartment I was telling you about, I need someone to tell these people who run the building that I work for you on the books.

VINNY

But you don't. You asking us to lie?

FRANK

I just need something that shows I'm employed so me and my family can get out of the shelter. A pay stub or a W-2.

VINNY

We can't do that.

FRANK

You'll really be doing me and my family a huge favor. I'll work it off.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (3)

VINNY

Nah, no can do. We were audited two years ago by those monkeys down at the IRS and had to pay a shitload of taxes.

ALDO

Vinny - maybe, we can do something with-

VINNY

Dad, we can't help him. We're not hiring anyone on the books, and we're for shit sure not lying to the government. Forget it. They'll take our license away.

FRANK

If you're so scared of the government, why you hiring men off the books?

Vinny has no answer.

VINNY

I told ya we can't do it, we can't do it. That's it.

Aldo looks at Frank, with sympathy.

ALDO

I'm sorry. My son takes care of the business - if there was something we could do, we'd do it.

A beat, as Frank realizes there is nothing more he can say.

FRANK

Well thank you for your time.
Merry Christmas.

ALDO

(apologetically)
Merry Christmas.

VINNY

Later. Hey, can you shut the door behind you. There's a draft in here.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (4)

FRANK

Yeah. Sure.

Frank exits.

EXT. FRONT LAWN - LONGO HOUSE - DAY

Frank exits the house, just in time to stop...

A fight. Justin shoves one of the kids to the ground.

FRANK

Hey, hey. What are you doing?

Frank rushes over and pulls Justin away from the kids.

JUSTIN

He said I smelled.

FRANK

Apologize.

JUSTIN

No way.

Frank slaps Justin in the back of the head.

JUSTIN (CONT'D)

Owh.

FRANK

Apologize.

JUSTIN

I'm sorry.

Frank helps the other kid to his feet.

FRANK

(to kid)

Are you okay?

KID

Yeah.

FRANK

That's not cool to tell people they smell.

KID

You could use a shower yourself.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

FRANK
Is that so?

KID
Yeah. You smell worse.

FRANK
Is that so?

KID
Yeah - that's so!

FRANK
Don't test me kid. I'll crack you
so hard you'll be sucking your
mother's meatballs through a straw.

The kid stops smiling. A little scared.

FRANK (CONT'D)
Go ahead, say another word.

The kid turns away.

FRANK (CONT'D)
That's what I thought. Pussy.
(to Justin)
Come on. Let's go.

As they walk away, Justin looks at the house. He sees...

Aldo come to the window and look out. They share a glance.

EXT. DYKER HEIGHTS STREETS - DAY

Frank and Justin walk toward the subway.

FRANK
When did you become a tough guy?
Carrying a knife, starting fights?

JUSTIN
He started it.

FRANK
Unless someone hits you or is about
to hit you, you don't fight. Got
it?

JUSTIN
Whatever.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

FRANK

Not whatever. Yes sir.

A beat.

JUSTIN

Where are we going now?

FRANK

I gotta find a job by six.

Justin notices something on Frank's face.

JUSTIN

What's that red stuff on your mouth?

Frank wipes his mouth.

FRANK

What red stuff?

JUSTIN

Did you eat something while you were in there?

FRANK

It's an insult to turn down an Italian woman's cooking. Did you know that? I bet you didn't know that.

JUSTIN

(pissed, hungry)
You suck.

INT. ANGELA MATTRESS - MOST PRECIOUS SHELTER - BRONX

Angela packs up their belongings. Christina, wiping her running nose on her sleeve, helps her pack.

Angela eyes a photo in a picture frame of her and Frank, younger, happier. She holds the picture frame, staring at it. A small smile breaks through her pain. Angela packs the photo.

Christina eyes Angela.

CHRISTINA

I'm finished packing.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

ANGELA

Put your jacket on, we're going to
the clinic.

EXT. SUBWAY STATION - DAY

Frank and Justin fight through the cold and walk toward a
subway station.

INT. TURNSTILE - SUBWAY STATION - DAY

Frank and Justin walk down the subway steps. They walk over
to the turnstiles. Frank looks around. No one is watching.

Justin ducks under. Then, Frank.

POLICE OFFICER (O.S.)

Hey!

A POLICE OFFICER heads toward them. He saw Frank and Justin
duck under the turnstile.

Frank looks to his left...

A STAIRWELL leading to a train.

FRANK

(to Justin)

Come on.

Frank and Justin move quickly, running down the steps.

POLICE OFFICER

Hey! Stop right there!

Frank and Justin run down the steps. Police Officer in tow.

INT. SUBWAY PLATFORM - SAME

Frank sprints down the platform. Justin does his best to
keep up. They push past people, knocking into them.

The Police Officer chases after them.

Frank turns down and underpass. Justin follows.

INT. UNDERPASS TUNNEL - SUBWAY STATION - SAME

Frank jumps down a flight of steps, running through an
underpass which leads to the other side of the station.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

FRANK
(to Justin)
Come on!

Justin, not far behind, jumps down the steps also, but rolls his ankle and falls to the ground.

JUSTIN
Owhh!

Frank stops. Sees Justin down on the ground. He runs back, lifts him up off his feet.

Justin's hands are cut and he can barely stand on his left foot.

JUSTIN (CONT'D)
I can't walk.

Frank looks up...

The Police Officer runs down the steps.

FRANK
Get on my back.

Justin hops onto Frank's back. Frank runs through the underpass.

The Police Officer is gaining on them.

INT. OPPOSITE SUBWAY PLATFORM - SUBWAY STATION - SAME

Passengers step onto a waiting train, about to leave the station.

Frank, with Justin on his back, sprints out from the underpass and enters the platform.

Doors on the train start to close.

Frank dashes to one of the closing doors. He JAMS his FOOT into the door. The door pops open. Frank quickly enters and the train doors shut behind him.

The Police Officer enters the platform from the underpass - not in time. He sees Frank and Justin as...

The TRAIN pulls out of the station.

INT. TRAIN CAR - SUBWAY - DAY

Frank coughs, out of breath. He sets Justin down. Justin winces in pain and takes a seat. Frank sits next to him, concerned.

FRANK

Let me see.

Frank reaches for Justin's ankle.

JUSTIN

Easy. It hurts!

FRANK

Can you bend your foot back?

Justin bends his foot back.

JUSTIN

Yeah, but it hurts.

FRANK

It's not broken. It's probably sprained. I have to tie your sneakers tight to cut off the swelling.

JUSTIN

No, leave it.

FRANK

I have to.

Frank unties Justin's sneaker and then reties it much tighter. Justin winces. Frank notices blood drip from Justin's hand.

FRANK (CONT'D)

You're bleeding.

Justin's hands are cut up.

Frank takes out some tissues from his pocket and gives them to Justin.

FRANK (CONT'D)

We'll get you cleaned up when we get into the city.

DISSOLVE TO:

FRANK AND JUSTIN STILL ON THE TRAIN

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

The train is now crowded. Filled with holiday shoppers.

Frank sits there, pensive. Justin sits next to him. He rubs his stomach, in pain. Justin looks at Frank, then rises from his seat. He limps into the middle of the subway car.

FRANK (CONT'D)

Where you going?

Justin ignores Frank and announces...

JUSTIN

I'm sorry to bother you, but I'm homeless and hungry, and if anyone has any spare change-

Frank jumps up out of his seat and grabs Justin, stopping him from finishing his speech.

FRANK

What are you doing?

JUSTIN

Getting money so I can eat.

FRANK

Get your ass back in that seat.

JUSTIN

But-

FRANK

Sit down!

Justin slumps back into his seat.

Frank proudly holds his head up at the gawking passengers, then he sits back down next to Justin.

FRANK (CONT'D)

Don't ever let me catch you doing that again. Begging is for people who are too lazy to get off their ass and get a job. We may live in a shelter, but we're not bums.

JUSTIN

Yeah, well, how am I supposed to eat if we don't have any money?

FRANK

We'll eat when we get back to the shelter.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

Justin sighs, frustrated, growing impatient.

INT. GRAND CENTRAL STATION - DAY

Frank and Justin walk through Grand Central. Justin limps, in pain.

EXT. MIDTOWN MANHATTAN - DAY

People everywhere - doing their last minute shopping. Christmas lights. The spirit is in the air.

A SANTA CLAUS rings a bell outside a department store. In the distance we see...

Frank and Justin walking through the sea of shoppers. Justin limps on his foot - in pain.

INT. PHARMACY - DAY

Frank and Justin (limping) walk down the first aid section. Frank looks around.

There's a woman down the aisle, but she's not paying attention to them.

Frank pulls a bottle of peroxide off the shelf.

FRANK

Hold out your hands.

Justin holds out his bloody hands. Frank liberally pours the peroxide onto Justin's wounds.

JUSTIN

Owhhhh!

FRANK

It'll only sting for a second.

(beat)

Let me see.

Justin holds out his hands. The wounds aren't that deep, but they definitely look painful.

Frank grabs a box of gauze off the shelf. He grabs some tape and wraps Justin's hands to stop the bleeding.

A RITE AID EMPLOYEE walks up behind them.

RITE AID EMPLOYEE

Can I help you with anything?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

The employee looks at Justin's hands, then eyes them up and down.

Frank and Justin turn and look at the employee. Caught.

FRANK

No, we're okay.

A beat. The Rite Aid employee talks to Frank in Spanish. Frank and her have a conversation, she is sympathetic. We don't know what they are saying, but Frank thanks her, then continues to quickly finish wrapping Justin's hands.

FRANK (CONT'D)

Come on.

Frank and Justin quickly exit. As they walk out, Justin grabs a candy bar off the shelf and sticks it into his pocket.

EXT. WASHINGTON SQUARE PARK - DAY

Frank examines Justin's swollen ankle. Justin pulls a the candy bar he stole out of his pocket.

FRANK

Where did you get that?

JUSTIN

I took it.

Frank shakes his head, but is not about to argue. Justin unwraps the candy bar.

JUSTIN (CONT'D)

Shit.

FRANK

What's the matter?

JUSTIN

This candy bar has peanuts in it.

FRANK

So?

JUSTIN

I'm allergic to peanuts. I break out in hives.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

FRANK

You're allergic to peanuts? I
thought you were allergic to
raisins.

JUSTIN

No, peanuts.

FRANK

See, that's what you get for
stealing.

Justin shakes his head, frustrated. He puts the bar back
into his jacket pocket.

FRANK (CONT'D)

I'm sorry I yelled at you on the
train. It's just, I don't want-
I'm just sorry. Okay?

Justin eyes Frank, shakes his head, accepting the apology.
Frank laces Justin's sneaker back up.

FRANK (CONT'D)

Think you can walk?

Justin stands. Tests the ankle.

JUSTIN

Yeah.

FRANK

Alright. If it really hurts, tell
me and we'll stop and take a break.

Frank puts his arm around Justin as they exit the park. He
notices a clock...

CLOSE ON CLOCK - 11:00 AM

Frank takes a deep breath, knowing there's not much time.

EXT. SOUTH STREET SEAPORT - DAY

People everywhere doing their last minute shopping.

INT. SOUTH STREET SEAPORT - DAY

Frank and Justin (limping) enter. The two of them stare wide
eyed at the sea of holiday shoppers.

INT. SANTA LAND - SOUTH STREET SEAPORT - DAY

Justin (limping) and Frank exit the elevator with the rest of the shoppers. They walk through the Santa Claus section.

A line of CHILDREN with their PARENTS wraps around the lavish Christmas display - all waiting to see Santa. Christmas MUSIC plays.

Justin eyes the KIDS, somewhat jealous. Frank sees it. Puts his arm around Justin - wishing he was in line with his family.

INT. HUMAN RESOURCES - SOUTH STREET SEAPORT - DAY

Frank knocks on a door that says "Human Resources." Justin stands there with him.

FRANK

Sit down. Rest your ankle.

Justin sits on a chair beside the door.

A HUMAN RESOURCE WOMAN, with Christmas hoop earrings, opens the door. She's on the phone.

HUMAN RESOURCE WOMAN

(on phone)

Hold on.

(to Frank)

Can I help you?

FRANK

Yeah hi. My name's Frank Diaz and I'm here for the security guard position. I was wondering who I should speak to.

The Woman calls out to another person in the office.

HUMAN RESOURCE WOMAN

Yo Patty, we filled all the security guard positions, right?

PATTY (O.S.)

Yeah.

The Woman turns back to Frank.

HUMAN RESOURCE WOMAN

They all filled.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

FRANK

Are there any other positions
available?

The Woman eyes Frank up and down.

HUMAN RESOURCE WOMAN

You don't look like a perfume
tester.

FRANK

I can be versatile.

HUMAN RESOURCE WOMAN

We don't really have anything right
now. Try back after the New Year?

The Woman shuts the door on Frank. Frank puts his foot in,
holding up the door.

FRANK

I can be a perfume tester. Whatta
I gotta do? Spray a bottle of
perfume, say try this new fragrance
Chez Monet. I can do that.

HUMAN RESOURCE WOMAN

Sir, move your foot before I call
security.

A beat. Frank removes his foot from the doorway. The woman
closes the door on them. Frank is getting angry.

JUSTIN

Can we go back to the shelter now?

FRANK

No. I ain't giving up.

INT. CLINIC - WAITING ROOM - DAY

Angela and Christina sit waiting.

A NURSE enters holding a clipboard.

NURSE

Angela Diaz?

Angela and Christina rise and follow the nurse.

INT. CLINIC - EXAMINING ROOM - DAY

Angela, Christina and a FEMALE DOCTOR enter an examining room. Christina climbs up on the table.

The Doctor begins checking her vitals. She looks over at... Angela, who fixes herself in the mirror.

DOCTOR
What's wrong with this little cutie here?

ANGELA
She's had a cold for the last three days. This morning she had a fever.

DOCTOR
Flu's going around.

Angela coughs.

DOCTOR (CONT'D)
Sounds like you're coming down with it too.

ANGELA
Everyone in our shelter is sick.

DOCTOR
Which shelter is that?

ANGELA
Most Precious Host.

A beat. As the Doctor listens to Christina's heart.

DOCTOR
You know there are better shelters in the city. There's Safe Haven downtown.

ANGELA
That's for women who've been abused. What are you saying?

DOCTOR
I just see a lot of women come in here who are in need of help, and they don't like to talk about it.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

ANGELA

I don't need help. My husband's
never laid a hand on me.

(a beat)

Why don't you just take care of my
daughter - that's what I came all
the way down here for.

The doctor keeps an indifferent smile, turns to Christina.

DOCTOR

Can you stick out your tongue for
me sweetie?

Christina sticks her tongue out. Angela is tense, a bit
remorseful for laying into the doctor.

ANGELA

Look, the truth is, I've been down
that road in the past, and I was
smart enough not to go down it
again. My husband's treated me
better than any man ever treated
me, he's take care of my son since
the day we met and he would die for
our daughter. I know there are
better shelters out there, but that
would mean leaving him. He would
never do that to me - and I would
never do that to him. We just hit
a rough patch, but things are
coming together. He's actually out
right now getting the keys to our
new apartment. This is our last
day in the shelter anyway.

DOCTOR

(sincere)

I was just giving you options if
you needed them, but it sounds like
you don't. Congratulations.

ANGELA

Thank you.

DOCTOR

I'm going to put your daughter on
antibiotics. I'll be right back
with the medicine, and I'll give
you something for your cough also.

The doctor exits the room.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

Angela walks over to Christina, who lays down on the table. Angela gently caresses Christina's head. Angela kisses her on the forehead.

EXT. ROCKERFELLER CENTER - DAY

The enormous tree at Rockerfeller Center is lit. Hundreds of ONLOOKERS stop, stare and take photos.

Frank, impatient, and Justin stand off to the side. Justin looks through the classified section of the newspaper.

FRANK

Anything?

JUSTIN

I'm looking. Relax.
(a beat, excited)
Here's one!

FRANK

What?

JUSTIN

Beautician in the Bronx.

FRANK

Funny.

JUSTIN

How hard could it be to cut hair?

FRANK

People go to a special school for that. You can't just perm someone's head or give em a weave without learnin'.

JUSTIN

You gotta go to school to cut hair?

FRANK

You gotta go to school for everything.

JUSTIN

Not if you wanna be president. All you gotta do is be 35 and be a U.S. citizen.

FRANK

You don't even know what you're saying.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

JUSTIN

Yes I do. I learned it in social studies.

FRANK

Just find another job, I'm never gonna be the president of United States and I for shit sure don't wanna be a beautician in the Bronx.

Justin goes back to the newspaper. A beat.

JUSTIN

Here's another one.

FRANK

What is it?

JUSTIN

Painters wanted.

FRANK

I can paint. Where?

JUSTIN

A school. 230 East 1st street.

FRANK

Good work...Hey, before we go, see that girl over there.

Justin looks up and sees...

A CUTE 12 year old GIRL, in a red and green wool Christmas jacket, eyes Justin. She is with her FAMILY - who are looking at the tree and posing for a photo.

FRANK (CONT'D)

She's been eyeing you for the last few minutes.

Justin eyes the cute girl back.

The cute girl smiles at him.

FRANK (CONT'D)

Oh, look at that. You got a smile. You're in like Flynn. Blow her a kiss or something.

JUSTIN

No way.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

FRANK

Give her a wink. Do something.

The cute girl's family start to move on. She waves at Justin as she walks away with her family.

Frank grabs Justin's hand and forces him to wave back. Justin pulls his hand down, embarrassed.

EXT. DOWNTOWN NY STREET - DAY

In the foreground, a HOMELESS MAN sits on a bucket, asleep, holding a paper cup. A sign besides him reads, "Homeless Vet, Will Work For Food."

Frank walks with Justin - who is still limping. By the looks of his stride, it's growing more painful. Frank hurries, Justin tries his best to keep up.

FRANK

You blew it. I'm disappointed in you. You never pass up a chance to throw down a rap. You always gotta have your A game ready.

JUSTIN

Girls are gross.

FRANK

Wait a year or two - that'll change. Your whole life, everything you do, will revolve around chasing the poonanny.

JUSTIN

Yuck.

FRANK

You say yuck now, but watch. One day you're gonna wake up and it's like someone reprogrammed your brain. All of a sudden, you got no control, you're like an animal, you gotta hunt and get em and kiss em and lick em and other things you shouldn't know about yet, but you'll see. It's sick! It's like you're possessed or something.

JUSTIN

No way. Uh uh.

A beat.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

FRANK

You ain't gay, are you?

JUSTIN

NO!

FRANK

It's just, we never had this conversation. You know - birds and bees. I mean, I never thought you were gay, but-

JUSTIN

I'm not gay!

FRANK

Okay. Easy. I believe you.

(a beat)

Ever get to first base with a girl?

JUSTIN

(proudly)

Second base.

FRANK

(impressed)

Second base? Really?

JUSTIN

Uh huh.

FRANK

What's second base these days?
I've been out of the loop so long,
I don't know about this stuff
anymore.

JUSTIN

I ain't talking about that with
you.

FRANK

That's cause you're lying. You
never got to second base.

JUSTIN

Did too! I kissed a girl.

FRANK

Yeah? No shit? Who was the
unlucky lady?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

JUSTIN
I'm not telling you.

FRANK
Not that girl at the shelter with
the wooden leg you're always with?

Justin's silence is his guilt.

FRANK (CONT'D)
You little dog! Taking advantage
of the handicap. So did you touch
tongues?

JUSTIN
None of your business.

FRANK
There's nothing weird about talking
about sex and stuff. You got any
questions you wanna ask, shoot.

JUSTIN
I'm cool.

FRANK
You know someday when you start
hitting triple and home runs, you
gotta bag it.

JUSTIN
What?

FRANK
Forget it.
(a beat)
Second my ass.

Frank laughs. They cross the street. When they get to the
other side. Frank stops. Looks up at a wall plastered with
billboards. Justin looks up and sees...

INSERT SHOT - A poster of an upcoming boxing event - the one
Frank was supposed to be involved in.

Frank stares at the billing.

JUSTIN
What's wrong?

FRANK
Nothing. Come on.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (3)

Frank and Justin continue walking.

EXT. P.S. 188 GRADE SCHOOL - DAY

Frank and Justin stand on the steps of a public school in lower Manhattan. Frank rings the bell.

FRANK
(to Justin)
How's your ankle?

JUSTIN
It hurts more.

FRANK
Try to keep your weight on the other leg.

MORRIS - African American, early 60's- opens the front door.

MORRIS
Can I help you?

FRANK
I'm here to apply for the painting job.

MORRIS
Come in, come in.

Morris holds the door open. They enter.

INT. GYMNASIUM - P.S. 188 - DAY

Morris leads Frank and Justin (limping) through the gym toward the custodian office.

MORRIS
Ever work in a school?

FRANK
Nah.

MORRIS
Buncha bratty kids with no respect.

FRANK
Won't bother me.

MORRIS
Know how to paint?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

FRANK

Yeah. Of course. I painted my car once. It came out just aright, but it saved me a lot of money.

MORRIS

Good. Principal Denner wants every classroom painted over the holiday break. Sonabitch expected me to do it myself while he at home sipping on eggnog. Never ask one to do, what you won't do yourself, right?

FRANK

Yeah. No.

MORRIS

Step in my office.

FRANK

(to Justin)

Go sit over there by the radiator.
Get warm.

Justin limps over to the radiator. Frank enters Morris's office.

INT. CUSTODIAN OFFICE - P.S. 188 - DAY

Morris organizes his desk, moves a pile of papers around searching for something.

Frank takes a seat on the other side.

Morris finds a pack of cigarettes and lights up.

MORRIS

Smoke?

FRANK

Sometimes.

MORRIS

Here.

Morris offers Frank a cigarette. Frank takes one, but doesn't light it. Morris lights up.

FRANK

Thank you.

Morris grabs an application.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

MORRIS

Let's fill this sucker out. Name?

FRANK

Frank Diaz.

MORRIS

Address?

FRANK

1873 Hunts Point Avenue. Bronx,
11457.

MORRIS

Social?

FRANK

987-65-4320. This job's on the
books right?

MORRIS

Of course it's on the books - it's
a city job.

FRANK

Good.

MORRIS

Where was your last place of
employment?

FRANK

I've been working for a
construction company, off the
books.

MORRIS

Before that?

FRANK

Professional boxer.

MORRIS

No kidding.

FRANK

You a fight fan?

MORRIS

No. Bowling's my sport.

FRANK

Bowling's cool. Bowling's cool.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

Frank smiles, nervously. Morris continues to fill out the application.

MORRIS

Okay. What else? What else?
Ever been convicted of a felony?

A beat.

FRANK

No.

MORRIS

Any medical conditions I should
know about?

FRANK

No.

MORRIS

Anyway you can start today? It'll
just be til three. I gotta get a
jump start on those classrooms.

FRANK

Yeah. Whatever you need.

Morris sizes Frank up.

MORRIS

You seem alright in my book. And I
needed someone yesterday. The job
pays \$12.50 an hour.

FRANK

\$12.50?

MORRIS

Yeah. Is that a problem?

FRANK

Nah. \$12.50's great.

MORRIS

Overtime is \$19.75.

FRANK

Wow.

MORRIS

Well Mr. Diaz -

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (3)

FRANK

Frank. Call me Frank.

MORRIS

Frank, unless you've changed your mind since you walked in, you got yourself a job.

FRANK

I do?

Frank smiles.

MORRIS

Don't look so happy. It sucks working here.

INT. CLASSROOM - P.S. 188 - DAY

Justin sits in a desk. Frank mixes some paint, in preparation for painting a wall.

FRANK

\$12.50 an hour! You know what that means?

JUSTIN

You can finally buy me something to eat?

FRANK

Yeah, yeah, I'll get you something on the way home. It means opening day, Yankee stadium - me and you. Sound like a plan?

Justin smiles.

JUSTIN

Yeah.

FRANK

I'm gonna get us those seats right up in the second tier over the first base side where all the foul balls go.

JUSTIN

Can we get hot dogs?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

FRANK

Hot dogs and peanuts. Well, no peanuts for you cause you're allergic.

JUSTIN

What about ice cream?

FRANK

Ice cream, cotton candy, popcorn...But don't think about food right now, it'll only make you hungrier. We still got two hours left in here.

JUSTIN

Two hours?

FRANK

Help me mix the paint and maybe I can get done quicker.

Justin walks over to Frank, who hands him a stick.

FRANK (CONT'D)

Mix it in a circle.

Justin starts mixing another can of paint.

Frank smiles at Justin.

FRANK (CONT'D)

We did it. Gimme five. Uptown, midtown, downtown.

Justin goes to give him five "downtown," but at the last minute, Frank switches his hand and holds out a brush with paint on it. Justin slaps the brush instead, and gets paint all over his hand.

FRANK (CONT'D)

(laughing)

What did you slap the brush for?

Justin flicks the stick of paint at Frank, flicking white paint all over his clothes.

JUSTIN

Oh, man, you gotta be careful mixing that paint.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

FRANK

Ah man, that ain't right. On your
hand is one thing, on my threads-

Morris enters the room holding Frank's papers.

MORRIS

Hey, Frank. Got a minute.

Morris and Frank step to the other side of the classroom.

FRANK

Yeah. What's up? I was just about
to start on this wall.

MORRIS

I ran your social through the
district computer. A felony charge
came up under your profile.

Frank looks like a deer in headlights.

MORRIS (CONT'D)

Know anything about that?

FRANK

A felony charge?

MORRIS

Said you were in jail for two
years.

Frank pauses, doesn't know what he should say. Finally, he
whispers to Morris, not wanting Justin to hear.

Justin is staring at Frank from the classroom.

FRANK

Look, I had something go down, but
that was a long time ago, know what
I'm saying. I was twenty one, I
was a stupid kid hanging with the
wrong crew. One night I was with
them and they went into this
bodega, I stayed outside. They
took some shit, but I didn't even
know they were gonna do it -

MORRIS

So they held up the place?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (3)

FRANK

I don't know what they did. I was outside. It was a big mess. I was guilty by association, but even the store clerk said I wasn't apart of it. I couldn't afford a good lawyer. You know how it is?

MORRIS

This is a problem.

FRANK

Look Mr. Morris, I'm not that guy. I got a wife and two kids - that was a mistake a long time ago - wrong place wrong time, wrong friends.

MORRIS

I need these classrooms painted more than you need this job, but the board of ed has a policy - no felons around the kids. I'm sorry. No way around that.

Frank nods, knows he has to go. He turns to Justin.

FRANK

(to Justin)

Put the brush down. Let's go.

Justin puts the paint brush down. He walks over to Frank and the two of them exit and walk down the long hallway together.

EXT. P.S. 188 GRADE SCHOOL - DAY

Frank exits out of the school, paint all over his clothes. Justin in tow, limping. It's pouring rain. They take cover under the ledge, waiting for it to subside.

JUSTIN

You never told me you went to jail.

FRANK

And you never told me you sucked face with Peg Leg Patty...Things we find out along the way.

A beat.

FRANK (CONT'D)

And whatta you listening to my business for?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

JUSTIN

I wasn't. I could just hear you.

A beat.

JUSTIN (CONT'D)

Does my Mom know?

FRANK

Yeah. She knows.

JUSTIN

Did you shoot anybody?

FRANK

No, I didn't shoot anybody.

A beat.

FRANK (CONT'D)

This is why your mother wants you to take up a sport, and stop hanging out on the street - so you don't end up in trouble like I did. Now that I think about it, you're joining a basketball team next week.

JUSTIN

But my ankle might be broke.

FRANK

Yeah, well, it'll be better by then. Now let's go. We only got a few hours left.

JUSTIN

It's pouring.

FRANK

Put your hood on.

Frank runs out into the rain. Justin limps as fast as he can to keep up.

EXT. NEWS STAND - DAY

It's pouring, cold rain. Frank, soaking wet, takes cover under a news stand. Justin slips and falls in a puddle. Soaking wet, he gets up and limps under the stand - tired and out of breath, teeth chattering.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Frank grabs a newspaper off the rack and hands it to Justin, who opens to the help wanted section.

JUSTIN
You're not gonna find anything
today. It's Christmas Eve.

FRANK
You wanna eat? You wanna warm
apartment? Find something.

Justin looks through the paper.

The ARAB NEWS STAND CLERK eyes Frank and Justin.

NEWS STAND CLERK
You buy paper or you put it down.

FRANK
Relax amigo. It's a quarter.

NEWS STAND CLERK
I'm running a business here. You
look, you buy.

FRANK
Is that so?

NEWS STAND CLERK
Yes, that's so.

Frank eyes the clerk.

JUSTIN
Here, I found something else.

FRANK
What's that?

Justin reads the paper.

JUSTIN
Stock room employees needed for
holiday.

Frank takes the paper and puts it back in the pile. He looks at the Arab Clerk and comments.

FRANK
Okay, I put it down. You happy?

The Clerk doesn't respond.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

FRANK (CONT'D)

Let's go.

JUSTIN

You can't go dressed like that.

FRANK

Why not?

JUSTIN

Your clothes wet and they got paint on it. They're not gonna hire you looking like that.

FRANK

Whatta you want me to do?

JUSTIN

Get new clothes.

FRANK

(sarcastic)

That's a great idea. Let's go on a shopping spree. Should we hit up Barney's or Armani?

JUSTIN

You don't have to spend money.

FRANK

Oh right, I forgot - they give clothes away for free now.

JUSTIN

Just do what Mom does.

EXT. BRITCHES - DAY

Frank and Justin walk through traffic and enter an upscale clothing store.

OMITTED

INT. MEN'S SECTION - BRITCHES - DAY

Holiday SHOPPERS bob and weave through aisles searching for last minute presents. The CAMERA FINDS...

Frank and Justin walking through the men's section of the store. Frank has pants in his hands and he's looking for shirt.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

FRANK
Your mother does this?

JUSTIN
Uh huh.

FRANK
And she gets on my case for
cursing...Find me a shirt to go
with this pants.

Justin pulls a multi colored shirt off the rack.

JUSTIN
How about this?

FRANK
You want me to look like a pimp.

Frank looks at another shirt, pulls it off the rack.

FRANK (CONT'D)
This is more like it.

JUSTIN
Yeah, more like a nerd.

FRANK
Shut up, just wait right here. I'm
gonna go try this on.

INT. DRESSING ROOM - BRITCHES - DAY

Frank closes the dressing room door. Mirrors everywhere. He catches his reflection - sees something he doesn't like. He looks tired and worn and disappointed in himself.

Frank removes his sweater. We see his bare chest -

CLOSE ON CHEST - knife scars and two bullet wounds.

Frank takes the shirt that he picked out and puts it on. Then, he takes his sweater and puts it over the shirt - obviously it's his intention to steal the clothes.

Frank removes his pants - and puts on the pants he pulled off the rack. Once he has the store's pants on - he grabs his pants and is about to put them over when...

JUSTIN (O.S.)
Get your hands off of me!

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Justin's cry for help stops Frank from putting his pants over the new pants. He opens the dressing room door and rushes out to see what the commotion is about.

INT. MEN'S SECTION - BRITCHES - DAY

TWO SECURITY GUARDS hold Justin by his jacket.

Frank walks out of the dressing room.

FRANK
What's going on?

SECURITY GUARD #1
He your son?

FRANK
My step son - yeah.

SECURITY GUARD #1
We caught him shoplifting.

FRANK
Shoplifting?

SECURITY GUARD #2
(to Justin)
Empty your pockets.

Frank eyes Justin, uneasy.

SECURITY GUARD #1
Kid, either you empty your pockets
or we're gonna do it for you.

FRANK
(to Security Guard)
Relax Kemo Sabe.
(to Justin)
Empty your pockets.

Justin lowers his head, then pulls a costume necklace out of his pocket and hands it to the Security Guards.

FRANK (CONT'D)
(to Justin)
What the hell are you doing?

Frank slaps Justin in the back of his head, it's more of a "what a stupid thing to do" type of slap than a "I'm trying to hurt you" slap.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

FRANK (CONT'D)
(to Security Guards)
Look fellas, I'm really sorry.
He's never done this before.

SECURITY GUARD #1
That's what they all say.

FRANK
You got the jewelry back, so no
harm no foul. Right?

SECURITY GUARD #2
We have to take him in the back and
write him up.

FRANK
Come on, it's Christmas. I'll take
care of him when we get home.

SECURITY GUARD #1
Store policy.

FRANK
I'll pay for the necklace. How
'bout that?

The Security Guards look at each other. Security Guard #1
nods his head toward Frank. Something's wrong. Now they
both see it.

CLOSE ON - The price tag of the stolen shirt is sticking out
from under Frank's sweater.

SECURITY GUARD #1
Sir, what do you have on underneath
that sweater?

FRANK
What are you talking about?

SECURITY GUARD #2
Sir, take off your sweater.

Frank notices the tag stick out from under his shirt.

FRANK
I was trying clothes on in the
dressing room.

Security Guard #2 pulls his walkie talkie out.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

SECURITY GUARD #2
(into walkie)
We're gonna need some more
assistance in the men's section.

Frank leans over and whispers to Justin.

FRANK
Walk outta here, right now. I'll
meet you at that news stand.

Justin is paralyzed with fear. He doesn't move.

FRANK (CONT'D)
(to Justin, forcefully)
Go!

Justin turns and heads toward the exit.

SECURITY GUARD #1
Where's he going?

Security Guard #2 moves to go after Justin, but Frank blocks him and stares into his eyes.

FRANK
You don't want to do that.

INSERT SHOT - Justin hurries out of the store behind a group of shoppers.

FRANK (CONT'D)
I don't want any problems.

SECURITY GUARD #1
You just got one buddy.

The Security Guard grabs Frank by the arm. Frank pulls free, throws a rack over and runs.

The two Security Guards give chase, yelling into their walkie talkies.

Frank stops when he sees...

THREE SECURITY GUARDS block the front exit.

Frank makes a quick turn to his left and heads into the women's section.

All five Security Guards pick up the pace and begin to chase him down.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (3)

Frank sees the approaching Guards. He picks up his pace.

The Guards close in.

Frank grabs a huge rack of clothes and throws it down in front of them. He runs - dashing towards another exit.

The Security Guards move around the fallen clothing rack and give chase.

However, Frank has opened up some distance between them. Frank knocks into a bunch of Shoppers and sprints out the door.

EXT. BRITCHES - STREET - DAY

Frank runs down the street as fast as he can.

The Security Guards run out of the store, but they realize that there is no way to catch him. They don't even try.

EXT. NEWS STAND - DAY

Justin waits under the news stand. Frank runs up under the stand. Grabs Justin, shaking him. Cursing at him in Spanish.

FRANK

Are you stupid? Huh?

JUSTIN

I'm sorry.

FRANK

Whatta were you doing? Stealing something for your girlfriend?

JUSTIN

It was for Mom.

A beat. Frank eyes Justin. That surprised him. He lays off Justin.

FRANK

Forget it. Just forget it.

(a beat, changes tone)

At least I got the clothes. How do they fit?

Frank removes his sweater and shows Justin the new outfit. Frank actually looks presentable.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

JUSTIN

They look good.

FRANK

Am I hireable?

(turns to Arab Clerk)

Am I hireable? Would you hire me
for a job dressed like this?

The Arab Clerk doesn't respond.

FRANK (CONT'D)

(to Justin)

Come on, let's go get a job.

They start to walk away, when suddenly Frank stops. A look
of horror fills his face. Justin sees it.

JUSTIN

Whatsamatter?

A long beat - as a sinking look fills Frank's face.

FRANK

My wallet. The money. It's in my
pants - back in the dressing room.

The same sinking look fills Justin's face. They look at each
other. Crestfallen.

EXT. BRITCHES - DAY

Frank and Justin stand across the street - half way down the
block from the clothing store they just robbed. They watch
as...

TWO SECURITY GUARDS stand outside the store.

JUSTIN

Whatta you gonna do?

FRANK

Nothing. I can't go back in there.
I'll get arrested. Shit!

Frank stops a PEDESTRIAN.

FRANK (CONT'D)

Excuse me. You have the time?

PEDESTRIAN

It's 2:15.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Frank runs his hands through his hair in frustration.

EXT. NY STREET - DAY

Frank and Justin (limping) walk through the cold city streets as hope fades away. Frank is walking as fast as he can.

FRANK

Even if I find a job now, I can't
pay the security deposit.

Justin stops walking. He holds his stomach in pain.

FRANK (CONT'D)

Come on. We don't have much time.

JUSTIN

I can't. My stomach.

FRANK

Your stomach has nothing to do with
your legs.

Justin falls to his knees in pain. Pedestrians step around him. Frank turns, sees Justin on the ground.

FRANK (CONT'D)

This some kinda act? Cause it
ain't funny. Get up.

JUSTIN

No. I swear.

Frank sighs, pressure mounting.

FRANK

Get up.

Justin starts to cry.

JUSTIN

I can't, it hurts!

Frank is losing his patience.

FRANK

Jesus Christ, you don't have to
throw a tantrum. We'll get some
food. Alright? Now get up and
stop crying like a baby.

EXT. ALLEY WAY - DAY

Justin sits besides a dumpster in the alley behind a restaurant. He's tired, hungry and in pain.

Frank rummages through the dumpster in search for food.

JUSTIN
Try to find something that's
wrapped.

FRANK
I'm looking.

Finally, Frank finds something.

FRANK (CONT'D)
Bingo.

Frank pulls out a box of half eaten doughnuts.

FRANK (CONT'D)
Look at this. A perfectly good,
jelly doughnut.

Frank hands it to Justin.

JUSTIN
It's like a rock.

FRANK
It's frozen, that's all.

Justin tries to take a bite out of the frozen doughnut. He rips it off with his teeth. He cautiously chews.

JUSTIN
This is disgusting.

FRANK
Yeah, well maybe if I didn't listen
to you and steal these clothes we
could've bought something edible.

JUSTIN
I've been asking you to get me
something to eat for the last four
hours.

A beat. Frank is slowly losing his patience.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

FRANK

I should've left you at the
shelter.

JUSTIN

Leave me now.

FRANK

I should.

JUSTIN

Go. I'll get back to the shelter
myself.

A beat.

FRANK

Just eat the doughnut.
(to himself, lamenting)
I don't know why I listened to you.

JUSTIN

This isn't my fault.

FRANK

No? Who's fault is it? You don't
throw paint on my pants, I don't
gotta get new ones. Is that my
fault?

A beat.

JUSTIN

(under his breath)
It's your fault we live in a
shelter.

A beat. Frank is in disbelief.

FRANK

What?

No response.

FRANK (CONT'D)

You do this all the time. This
time I'm not letting you get away
with it. Now, what did you just
say?

JUSTIN

I said it's not my fault.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

FRANK

No. You said, "it's my fault we
live in a shelter."

Justin lowers his head, rips another piece of the doughnut
with his teeth, trying to avoid this confrontation.

FRANK (CONT'D)

You think I'm a loser? Is that
what you think? Y'know how many
families are struggling to make it
in this country? A lot. Someday
you'll see how hard it is to raise
kids.

JUSTIN

I'm not gonna have kids unless I
can afford to take care of them.

FRANK

You have an answer for everything,
don't you?

JUSTIN

More answers than you.

Frank smiles, but is seething inside.

FRANK

You think I needed you in my life?
You think I needed that kinda
responsibility?

JUSTIN

(steely)

You think I needed you?

FRANK

Yeah, you did. Or do you think
you'd be better off with your real
pops? You can go back and live
with him and get your ass beat in
every day for no reason.

(a beat)

What? Got nothing to say now?

JUSTIN

Shut up!

FRANK

You wanna be a big man with a big
mouth, but when someone fights back
you got nothing to say.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (3)

JUSTIN

I'm a bigger man than you.

FRANK

Is that so?

JUSTIN

Yeah. I can make more money
begging in an hour than you can
make in a day.

FRANK

Oooh. Big man.

JUSTIN

I can read.

That quiets Frank. He loses his cocky smile.

JUSTIN (CONT'D)

And I can walk with a broken ankle
all over the city for five hours.
You couldn't even come out of the
corner for three more minutes and
at least lose a fight like a real
man.

A beat. Frank looks shocked. Frank grabs the jelly doughnut
out of Justin's hand and throws it down the alley.

Then, Frank storms off, headed back toward the street,
leaving Justin behind. That one really hurt.

EXT. TIMES SQUARE - DAY

Frank paces back and forth, furious with Justin, furious with
himself and the situation he's in. He struggles with
something deep inside. He looks up at the electronic
teletron.

CLOSE ON TELETRON - It's 3:00 PM

Then, he stops pacing. He reaches into a garbage can and
pulls out an empty coffee cup. He holds it in his hand as if
he were about to beg. He eyes PEDESTRIANS as they march by.
His dignity and pride painfully eluding him.

FRANK

(very low)

Can you spare any change?

His ego doesn't allow him to say it too loudly.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

FRANK (CONT'D)
(louder)
Can you spare any change, please?

People walk by, ignoring Frank.

FRANK (CONT'D)
Hi, excuse me, can you spare some-

The pedestrian doesn't even look at him. Frank can't believe he's doing this.

FRANK (CONT'D)
Can you spare some change please?

A woman stops and puts some change in his cup.

FRANK (CONT'D)
Thank you very much. Merry
Christmas.
(to next pedestrian)
Can you spare some change?

Justin limps out of the alley and over to Frank.

FRANK (CONT'D)
(to pedestrian)
Spare some change?

JUSTIN
You're never gonna get anything
that way.

FRANK
I'm not talking to you. Go back to
the shelter.
(to next pedestrian)
Excuse me ma'am, can you spare some
change?

Justin pulls his arm out from his sleeve. He hides his arm under his shirt, making it seem like he has only one arm.

Frank looks at Justin, wondering what he is doing.

Justin pulls another coffee cup out of the garbage can and holds it out with his only arm.

JUSTIN
Excuse me sir, can you spare a few
dollars so I can get something to
eat?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

A MAN holding a bag full of presents stops for Justin, pulls out his wallet and hands Justin a few dollars.

JUSTIN (CONT'D)
Thank you sir. Have a nice
holiday.

Justin eyes Frank, showing him up. Justin approaches a woman.

JUSTIN (CONT'D)
Excuse me Miss, can you spare a few
dollars so I can get something to
eat?

The WOMAN stops and removes a few dollars for Justin. Justin accepts the money.

JUSTIN (CONT'D)
Merry Christmas.

Frank eyes Justin, sad that he's resorting to this. Frank pulls his arm out of his sleeve and hides it under his shirt, doing the same thing Justin did. Now, Frank also has only one arm also.

FRANK
(to Justin)
I'll be across the street.

Frank crosses to the other side of the street.

EXT. CHURCH - DAY

Daylight and time are running out for Frank and Justin. We follow TWO MOURNERS as they enter a church, passing Frank and Justin, who sit on the Church steps counting the money they accumulated from begging. Frank smokes the cigarette that he took from the custodian.

FRANK
You ever smoke with your friends?

Justin shrugs his shoulders.

FRANK (CONT'D)
Yes, no?

JUSTIN
No.

Frank holds out the cigarette to Justin the cigarette. Justin stares at it, unsure whether he should take it.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

FRANK

It's okay. Go ahead. Better your first time with me.

Justin takes a drag. Coughs his brains out.

Frank laughs and takes the cigarette back.

FRANK (CONT'D)

I'm gonna tell you something you should never forget. You listening?

Justin nods his head, still coughing.

FRANK (CONT'D)

I'm gonna tell you the secret to life. This is all you need in order to survive.

JUSTIN

Besides food?

FRANK

Besides food.

A beat.

FRANK (CONT'D)

This is the most important thing I'm ever gonna tell you.

A beat.

FRANK (CONT'D)

There's nothing to fear.

Justin listens, waiting for more.

FRANK (CONT'D)

Simple as that. There's nothing to fear. There's gonna be a lot of people in your life telling you that you should be afraid, that's how they're gonna try to control you. Follow what I'm saying?

JUSTIN

I think so.

FRANK

Fear is the most powerful weapon you can use on someone.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

FRANK (CONT'D)

They make us fear not having money,
not having the coolest clothes, or
the
nicest house, or choosing the wrong
religion, or losing our freedom.
That's how they control us.

(a beat)

They're gonna try to get in your
head someday and scare you into
doing what they want you to do.
Don't let them do it.

JUSTIN

Who's they?

FRANK

Everyone. Your boss, teachers,
friends, lovers, police, the
government, priests. That's how
this church was built. All on
fear of not knowing what's gonna
happen when we die.

Justin tries to process this, but doesn't seem to know how to
take it. He looks a little confused.

FRANK (CONT'D)

I got scared and look where it got
us...Just don't ever let anyone
scare you, that's all I'm saying.

(a beat)

How much you got there?

Justin hands Frank all of his money, then ducks out the
cigarette.

JUSTIN

A hundred and forty.

FRANK

(shocked)

A hundred and forty?

JUSTIN

How much did you get?

Frank takes the money from Justin. Embarrassed.

FRANK

A little less than that.

JUSTIN

Do we have enough?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (3)

FRANK

No.

JUSTIN

I can get another hundred in an
hour or two.

FRANK

We don't have time. Besides, money
without a job ain't getting us the
apartment.

All of a sudden, the doors to the Church open up behind Frank
and Justin. Frank and Justin step to their respective sides.

MOURNERS, all dressed in black, exit the Church with tears in
their eyes. Organ MUSIC from inside, solemnly echoes
outside.

Frank lowers his head, as Mourners pour out of the Church.
Sorrow in his eyes for their loss.

Finally, FOUR PALLBEARERS exit carrying the coffin. They
walk the coffin to an awaiting hearse on the street.

The MOTHER of the deceased exits behind the coffin, holding
onto it with one hand, crying, screaming - a MAN holds her up
from collapsing to the ground.

As the procession proceeds to the street, Frank rejoins
Justin's side. Frank puts his arm around Justin - helps him
limp down the church steps.

MONTAGE BEGINS

MUSIC UP - SILENT NIGHT

EXT. CHINA TOWN - DAY

Frank and Justin (limping) walk in search of a job. There is
a desperation in Frank's step, for he knows time is running
out. DOLLY IN and ZOOM OUT as they walk toward us.

EXT. LITTLE ITALY - DAY

Frank enters a restaurant and talks with a HOST. We don't
hear what they are saying, but when Frank turns around and
walks out, we know there's no job available.

EXT. KATZ'S DELI - DAY

Justin waits outside in the cold. A beat later, Frank walks
out of the deli. Nothing.

EXT. AMC 42ND STREET MOVIE THEATER - DAY

Frank walks out of the theater. Justin waits, cold. After a few beats, Frank walks out. Rejected again.

EXT. 42ND STREET PORN SHOP - DAY

Frank walks out of a porn shop. No luck there either. Justin is staring in the window at a porn picture. Frank grabs him and pulls him away.

CENTRAL PARK - DAY

Frank and Justin walk through the park.

EXT. STOREFRONT - DAY

Day turned to night. Frank runs up to a store. The MANAGER is just about to lock the door. Frank bangs on the window. The Manager waves that they are closed, then locks the door. Frustrated, Frank kicks and punches the metal gate.

EXT. SOUTH STREET SEAPORT - DUSK

Justin stands in front of the large Christmas tree of singing CAROLLERS - who serenade the patrons of the South street seaport with a Christmas song.

Frank slumps out of restaurant in the seaport - defeated. He walks over to Justin and shakes his head - no job. Frank and Justin exit the seaport.

MONTAGE OVER

EXT. NEW YORK CITY STREETS - TOYS R US - NIGHT

Christmas lights shine bright. STORE OWNERS close their front gates and shut down for the holiday.

Frank and Justin plod down the street towards the subway station. Depressed.

JUSTIN

There's gotta be somewhere else we
can go.

Frank remains silent. He knows it's over.

JUSTIN (CONT'D)

What about trying a few more
restaurants?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Frank walks over to a man selling watches on the street. He grabs one of the watches, checks the time, looks defeated.

JUSTIN (CONT'D)

What time is it?

FRANK

Five fifty. There's no way we can get back up there in time.

Frank is absolutely defeated. Knows it's over.

JUSTIN

What if we called her and-

FRANK

Let's just go back to the shelter and get you some food.

JUSTIN

I'm not hungry anymore.

FRANK

Yeah you are.

JUSTIN

No, that jelly doughnut filled me up. Really.

Frank smiles, touched by Justin's willingness to tough it out.

FRANK

We should get back.

Justin lowers his head, realizing it's over. As they walk together, something catches Frank's eye. He stops walking.

JUSTIN

What's wrong?

Frank looks into the window of Toy's R Us.

FRANK

Come on.

Frank and Justin enter.

INT. TOYS R US - NIGHT

Justin looks at a display of toys. Frank walks over, holding a doll in his hands.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

FRANK

Is this what Christina wanted?

JUSTIN

You're buying her a present?

FRANK

Yeah, I'm buying her a present.
Why?

A beat.

JUSTIN

What about me?

FRANK

What about you?

JUSTIN

I just walked all over the city,
sprained my ankle and starved for
ten hours, and she gets present?

FRANK

Is this what she wants?

JUSTIN

Yeah.

FRANK

Thank you. Now go pick something
out for yourself. Under twenty
dollars.

Justin feels guilty.

JUSTIN

Forget it.

FRANK

No, go get something.

JUSTIN

I'm fine.

FRANK

No you're not. You just gave me
shit and made me feel bad for not
thinking of you - go get something.

JUSTIN

I don't want anything.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

FRANK
(irritated)
Yeah you do. If you didn't, you
wouldn't've asked me.

A beat as Justin struggles with something inside.

JUSTIN
Did you mean what you said?

FRANK
Said about what?

JUSTIN
That you didn't need me around.

FRANK
No. Of course not. We were
arguing, that's all.

Tears fill Justin's eyes. He begins to cry.

FRANK (CONT'D)
Hey, hey, what are you doing?

A beat.

FRANK (CONT'D)
Justin, what's wrong man? Your
ankle hurting or something?

JUSTIN
Do you love me?

A beat. Frank is taken aback.

FRANK
What?

JUSTIN
You never say it. You always tell
Christina and Mom, but you never
tell me.

FRANK
You're a man. A little man, but
still a man.

Justin looks up at Frank, tears in his eyes. He needs to
hear it.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (3)

FRANK (CONT'D)

You know I do. But we're men and men don't do that. Imagine if I dropped you off at school and yelled out in front of your friends, "Hey Justin, I love you."

Justin laughs.

FRANK (CONT'D)

You'd kick my ass.

Justin smiles, he knows he's right.

FRANK (CONT'D)

See, when we play fight and I get you in a head lock or something, that's me telling you in code. I thought you knew that.

Justin shakes his head no, embarrassed.

FRANK (CONT'D)

Well, now you know, stupid.

Frank gives Justin a playful slap in the back of the head.

Justin punches Frank in the arm.

FRANK (CONT'D)

What was that? Is that all you got?

Frank slaps Justin in the head again.

FRANK (CONT'D)

Throw some weight behind that punch. Like I taught you.

Justin hits Frank even harder.

FRANK (CONT'D)

That's better, but I know you can bring it harder. You ain't no pussy.

Frank slaps Justin again.

Justin retaliates with his hardest punch.

FRANK (CONT'D)

There you go. That's the way I used to hit when I was your age.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (4)

Justin punches Frank again.

FRANK (CONT'D)
Maybe I will take you down to the
gym someday - just don't tell Mom.

Justin punches Frank again and again. Frank laughs, thinking it's playful, but Justin doesn't stop punching him. He continues throwing hard punches.

FRANK (CONT'D)
Okay, that's enough.

Justin throws a flurry of hard punches into Frank's arm and chest. Justin has lost control and his punches are no longer playful, but filled with animosity and frustration. Frank defends himself, trying to stop the punches.

FRANK (CONT'D)
Hey, easy. Stop that.

Frank mashes Justin in the head to push him away.

Justin comes back at him, throwing another flurry of tearful punches.

FRANK (CONT'D)
Hey, hey, hey!!! Stop it!

Frank grabs Justin to stop the attack.

Justin shoves him away. He takes a step back, staring at Frank, tears in his eyes. Then, Justin turns and limps away.

FRANK (CONT'D)
Hey, where you going? You didn't
pick out a toy.

Justin heads towards the exit.

INT. TRAIN CAR - SUBWAY - NIGHT

Frank and Justin sit on the train, headed back to the shelter. Frank holds Christina's present. Justin has his eyes closed. Both of them are physically and emotionally exhausted.

EXT. MOST PRECIOUS BLOOD HOMELESS SHELTER - NIGHT

Frank and Justin walk through the cold streets back to the shelter. A light snow begins to fall.

INT. MOST PRECIOUS BLOOD HOMELESS SHELTER - NIGHT

People are packed into the shelter. It is much more crowded, due to the holiday and the bad weather.

Frank and Justin move through the crowd. They head back to their space in the shelter.

INT. BEDS - MOST PRECIOUS BLOOD SHELTER - NIGHT

Christina is asleep on the bed. Angela is packing the last of their belongings, assuming they are leaving the shelter.

Frank and Justin walk over. Angela sees Justin limping.

ANGELA

What happened to your leg?

JUSTIN

I slipped.

Justin lays down on the bed.

ANGELA

Are you okay?

JUSTIN

Yeah.

FRANK

He's fine. Just a sprain. How's Christina?

Frank leans over, touches her head and places the doll right next to her.

ANGELA

Her fever broke.

FRANK

Good.

ANGELA

What took you so long? I started to worry.

A beat. Frank lowers his head.

ANGELA (CONT'D)

You can tell me on the way. I packed up all of our stuff. We can get going?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Frank motions for Angela to step over by the window where they can talk. The snow is falling much harder.

ANGELA (CONT'D)
Something wrong?
(notices pants)
You got new clothes?

FRANK
Oh, yeah. Long story.

A beat. It pains Frank to break the bad news.

FRANK (CONT'D)
We didn't get the apartment.

ANGELA
What are you talking about?

A beat.

FRANK
To qualify, I need to have a job on the books.

ANGELA
What?

FRANK
We went looking all day. I couldn't find anything.

ANGELA
So now what?

FRANK
They're gonna call the next person on the list. But when another apartment opens up, they'll call us. It could be another couple of months. In the meantime, I'll find something on the books.

ANGELA
That's such bullshit.

FRANK
I know.

ANGELA
Is there someone here who can call-

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

FRANK
I tried everything.

Angela is visibly upset.

FRANK (CONT'D)
I'm gonna wash up. Let's go have a
nice Christmas dinner.

ANGELA
(let down)
Shouldn't we eat here and save our
money?

FRANK
It's been a long day and he's
starving. Let's just go eat.

Angela stares out the window, trying to control her emotions.
Frank holds her hand.

ANGELA
Sure. Okay.

FRANK
I'm gonna go wash up.

Frank walks away. Off Angela, devastated.

EXT. RESTAURANT - STREET - NIGHT

Frank, Angela, Justin and Christina walk down the street.
Christina is on Frank's shoulders, holding her doll.

The streets are glowing with festive lights. CAROLLERS sing.
Frank and Christina sing along.

FRANK AND CHRISTINA
(singing)
When you're walking in a winter
wonderland. In the meadow we can
build a snow man, and pretend-

ANGELA
Where are we going?

FRANK
To this place up here.
(to Christina)
Hey, you stopped singing. Who told
you to stop singing?

Christina continues singing.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Frank, Angela, Christina and Justin stop at the entrance of a fancy Italian restaurant. Frank opens the door, but Angela refuses to go in. She's taken aback.

ANGELA

No. Frank! No!

FRANK

Come on.

ANGELA

No, I don't want to go in there.

FRANK

Why not?

ANGELA

This is where you took me on our first date.

FRANK

You loved the food.

ANGELA

It's too expensive.

FRANK

Ange, it's Christmas, me Justin had a long day and I wanna have a good meal. Now, the three of us are going in there and grubbing. You can do what you want - but we would like you to join us. Ain't that right Christina?

CHRISTINA

I want Mommy to come.

FRANK

She will.

Frank enters the restaurant with Christina. Justin holds the door for Angela.

JUSTIN

You coming?

ANGELA

Go.

Justin enters. Angela remains outside.

INT. WATER'S EDGE RESTAURANT - NIGHT

CAMERA PANS across the crowded restaurant, filled with people, most of whom are dressed up in their best Christmas outfit. A MAN plays piano as a WOMAN sings Christmas songs. She has an amazing voice.

Frank, Christina and Justin (holding Christina's doll) approach the HOST.

HOST
Hi, Merry Christmas. Table for three?

FRANK
Four. My wife 'll be coming in shortly.

As the Host gathers the menus, Angela enters and joins their side.

FRANK (CONT'D)
And here she is.

HOST
Right this way.

Angela shoots Frank a look and follows the Host in.

The HOST walks Frank over to an empty table. Some patrons in the restaurant stare at Frank and the kids.

INT. TABLE - WATER'S EDGE RESTAURANT - NIGHT

Frank and Angela sit on the same side of the table. Christina and Justin sit on the opposite side.

HOST
Enjoy your meal.

FRANK
Thank you.

Justin quickly opens the bread basket on the table and begins devouring the bread. He notices a KID dressed up at the next table staring at him. Justin lowers his head, ignoring the stare, and devours the bread.

CHRISTINA
I want spaghetti.

A WAITER approaches.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

WAITER
Merry Christmas.

ANGELA/FRANK
Merry Christmas.

WAITER
What can I get for you this evening?

FRANK
Two sodas for the kids. She'll have spaghetti with butter. Justin, whatta you want?

JUSTIN
Chicken parmigiana.

FRANK
Chicken parmigiana for the big man, and I'll have the steak and my wife will have the lobster.

ANGELA
(whispers)
No, it's too expensive.

FRANK
(ignoring)
And two glasses of red wine.

WAITER
Very good. I'll be right back with your drinks.

The Waiter takes the menus and walks away. Justin and Christina continue to eat all of the bread.

Frank puts his arm around Angela.

ANGELA
You're a jerk. You know that?

FRANK
(dismissive)
Yeah.

A beat.

ANGELA
Are you gonna tell me everything that happened today?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

Frank chews on some bread, deciding whether he wants to answer the question.

The Piano player starts up another song. It's a slow, beautiful melancholy song.

FRANK
I think we should dance.

ANGELA
There's no place to dance.

FRANK
(to kids)
Who thinks we should dance?

Christina immediately raises her hand. Frank raises his.

FRANK (CONT'D)
I need a majority.

Frank looks at Justin.

JUSTIN
Don't embarrass us.

Frank kicks Justin under the table.

FRANK
I said I need a majority.

Justin raises his hand.

FRANK (CONT'D)
After counting the votes, it looks
like I got the majority.

Frank rises. Holds out his hand. Angela shakes her head, then rises, knowing she has no choice.

ANGELA
Let's go over there, out of the
way.

FRANK
Right here is fine.

Frank pulls Angela close and they begin to slow dance in the middle of the restaurant. None of the patrons seem to mind. They whisper to each other.

FRANK (CONT'D)
I just wanna say - I'm sorry.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (3)

ANGELA
Sorry for what?

FRANK
Being such a loser.

ANGELA
Don't talk like that.

FRANK
I can't even get a job - I'm a
loser.

ANGELA
You're not a loser and you know it.

A beat. The Female Singer belts out a beautiful song.

Frank looks troubled.

FRANK
Why are you with me?

ANGELA
I said stop it.

FRANK
You could've had any man you
wanted. I mean, I had lot of
potential, but now whatta I got?

ANGELA
No matter how many wonderful things
I can say about you right now, it
doesn't matter. You're in your own
pity part and you're not gonna
listen to me.

A beat.

FRANK
Alright, you don't wanna answer
that question, answer this one, if
someone showed you a crystal ball
and told you that this was where
you'd end up, would you do it
again? The truth.

A beat. Angela stares into his eyes. Without expression.

ANGELA
(whispers)
The truth is I love you.
(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (4)

ANGELA (CONT'D)

That's the truth.

(a beat)

Would I do this again? No, I
wouldn't.

Frank keeps his smile, pretending that didn't hurt, but it
did.

ANGELA (CONT'D)

You wouldn't either...Would you?

A long beat as they continue to dance in each other's arms.
Frank doesn't respond.

A WIDE SHOT from outside the restaurant as Frank and Angela
continue to dance.

OMITTED

INT. WATER'S EDGE RESTAURANT - NIGHT

An hour later. CLOSE ON the empty plates. Frank, Angela,
Christina and Justin looks like they just ate a feast.
Justin rubs his aching stomach.

JUSTIN

I don't feel good.

ANGELA

You ate everything except the bread
basket.

The Waiter arrives with the check.

WAITER

How was everything?

FRANK

Excellent.

ANGELA

Great, thank you.

WAITER

I'll leave this with you. The cake
is on the house. Merry Christmas.

ANGELA

Merry Christmas to you too.

FRANK

Merry Christmas.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

The Waiter walks away. Frank opens the bill.

FRANK (CONT'D)
What happened, one of you break a window?

ANGELA
I knew we should've went somewhere else.

FRANK
It's fine.

Frank pulls all of his crumpled money out of his pocket. He starts to organize it and put it towards the bill.

ANGELA
Here, why don't you take the kids outside, give me the money and I'll pay the bill.

FRANK
I'm not doing that.

ANGELA
Doing what?

FRANK
Walking out on a bill on Christmas Eve.

ANGELA
No one's walking out-

FRANK
I know what you do. You don't think I know?

Angela eyes Frank, not in the least bit embarrassed of her actions.

FRANK (CONT'D)
Just let me pay for this. Please.

Frank digs back into his pocket for the remaining money and adds it to the pile. Frank puts down every dollar he has.

FRANK (CONT'D)
We ready? Bundle up.

Frank and his family put their coats on. Frank kisses Angela and they exit the restaurant.

EXT. STREET - MOST PRECIOUS BLOOD SHELTER - NIGHT

Frank, holding Christina, walks with Angela and Justin back toward the shelter. As they near the shelter, Frank looks closer. Something catches his eye.

INSERT SHOT - Smiddy, the creepy guy we met earlier, stands outside the shelter smoking a cigarette. However, he is wearing Frank's army jacket.

CLOSE ON - DIAZ - the jacket.

Frank stops, he can't believe his eyes. He hands Christina over to Angela.

ANGELA
What's the matter?

FRANK
My jacket.

Something clicks in Frank, something dangerous and scary. He marches over toward Smiddy. And without warning, punches him in the head. The assault doesn't stop there. Frank throws punch after punch, pummeling Smiddy. The guy has no chance.

ANGELA
Frank! Stop!

Angela runs over to try and stop Frank, but...

There's an evil resolve in Frank's eyes, as he continues to pummel Smiddy with punch after punch.

Smiddy falls into a ball on the ground.

Frank repeatedly kicks Smiddy in the head.

ANGELA (CONT'D)
Frank, stop! Somebody help!
FRANK!

Frank kicks Smiddy until he is motionless. Then, Frank reaches into his pocket and pulls out the KNIFE he took from Justin. He opens it and is about to plunge it into Smiddy.

ANGELA (CONT'D)
(pleads)
NO!!! FRANK DON'T!!!

Frank, seething, looks back at his family. His eyes wild with anger. He breathes heavily, like a savage. Then, he stops himself as he sees Justin's innocent, scared eyes.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Angela and Christina cry. Justin is absolutely frightened.

Frank closes the knife. Then, he strips his jacket off of Smiddy.

PEOPLE come running out of the shelter. They push Frank away from Smiddy.

Frank begins to calm. He regains control, puts his jacket on and walks over to his family.

FRANK

Come on. Let's go in.

Frank escorts his family back into the shelter.

INT. BEDS - MOST PRECIOUS BLOOD SHELTER - NIGHT

There is a quiet tension between Frank and his family. Frank prepares Justin and Christina's bed. Angela prepares their bed. No words are spoken.

The Shelter Director and another SHELTER EMPLOYEE approach Frank.

SHELTER DIRECTOR

Mr. Diaz.

FRANK

Yeah.

SHELTER DIRECTOR

Can I talk to you a second?

FRANK

Yeah, sure.

SHELTER DIRECTOR

What happened out there?

FRANK

He robbed my jacket. Things got a little out of hand. I'm sorry.

SHELTER DIRECTOR

I thought you were placed in an apartment this morning?

FRANK

I didn't qualify for it.

SHELTER DIRECTOR

Sorry to hear that.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

FRANK

Is he pressing charges or something?

SHELTER DIRECTOR

No. But, unfortunately I am going to have to ask you to forfeit your bed and leave the shelter? You know our policy on fighting.

ANGELA

That man stole my husband's jacket.

SHELTER DIRECTOR

I'm aware of that and I plan deal with him accordingly.

(to Frank)

I can give you a few minutes to pack up.

ANGELA

You're throwing us out? You're gonna throw my kids out in the cold?

SHELTER DIRECTOR

No, you can stay and keep one bed.

Angela gets in the director's face.

ANGELA

I don't want one bed! I have two kids! Count! One! Two! And myself - that's three! Three of us! I need two beds! And I need my husband!

Frank gently backs her away.

FRANK

Calm down.

ANGELA

Don't tell me to calm down!

Christina starts to cry. Angela is still in her rant.

ANGELA (CONT'D)

That scum robs my husband and he gets to stay? How is that fair? Huh? How is it fair?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

Angela, tears streaming down her face, pushes Frank off of her.

SHELTER DIRECTOR
I'm sorry. That's our policy.

Angela, at her end, walks off.

INT. PAY PHONE - MOST PRECIOUS BLOOD - NIGHT

Angela, frazzled, dials a number from a pay phone. She is hesitant to press the last number, but she finally does. It rings. She waits. Finally a MAN'S VOICE answers. We don't know it yet, but it's Angela's ex-husband, Luis.

LUIS (O.S.)
Hello. Hello?

A beat.

ANGELA
Hey, it's me.

INT. BEDS - MOST PRECIOUS BLOOD SHELTER - NIGHT

Justin and Christina sit on their bed, waiting. Frank sits on the opposite bed.

Angela walks back over to her family.

FRANK
Where'd you go?

A beat. Angela begins to pack up.

ANGELA
(hesitant)
I called Luis.

FRANK
(devastated)
You what?...What?

A beat.

ANGELA
We have nowhere to go. He's gonna pick us up and let us stay with him.

Frank eyes her, in shock.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

FRANK

Whatta you talking about? We can go to another shelter.

ANGELA

No we can't...The kids can't live like this anymore.

(to herself)

Go to another shelter?

Angela grabs their stuff.

FRANK

Hold on a second.

Frank steps in between Angela and the kids. He moves her away.

ANGELA

Get off of me.

FRANK

After everything he did to you, you're gonna go back to him?

ANGELA

I'm not going back to him. I'm bringing my family to a warm and safe place to sleep.

FRANK

You even think how it makes me look if I let you go live with your ex husband?

ANGELA

Who cares Frank? Who cares how you look right now?

FRANK

You didn't even consult me.

ANGELA

Why? So you coulda stopped me.

FRANK

You know, you're always up in my shit about showing them "the right way." No swearing, no cursing, all that bullshit. Yet you're teaching them how to lie, cheat and steal. Now this.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

FRANK (CONT'D)

What kinda example you setting?
Huh? Where's it gonna get them if
we keep preaching the right way,
but showing them the wrong way?

ANGELA

I've done everything the right way
all my life and look where it got
me. Look where it got me.

(a beat)

Justin, Christina, each of you take
a bag and let's go.

(to Frank)

You've tried your best to fix this.
Now it's my turn.

EXT. MOST PRECIOUS BLOOD SHELTER - NIGHT

A running car awaits outside. ANGELA'S ex husband, LUIS,
30's, sits in his car.

Frank, Angela, Christina and Justin exit the shelter with
their belongings (Justin's suitcase, the bag with all their
photos, clothes, etc). Angela sees Luis and stops.

Luis gets out of the car, approaches Angela.

Frank steps away, too proud to have anything to do with this.

LUIS

How you doing?

ANGELA

Fine.

Luis looks down at Justin.

LUIS

(to Justin)

How's it going big guy?

Justin doesn't respond.

ANGELA

Can we just do this the way I asked
on the phone? I don't wanna make
this harder than it is.

LUIS

Yeah, sure.

Angela looks at Frank.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

ANGELA

Ready?

FRANK

Nah. You go.

LUIS

Hey man, it's all good.

FRANK

Nah, it ain't good. It ain't good
what you did to her.

ANGELA

Frank, for Christ's sake.

LUIS

You don't even know my side of the
story-

FRANK

Shut up. You don't have a side of
a story. A guy like you got no
alibis.

LUIS

Look, I don't want any problems. I
came here to help.

FRANK

I know. You came to help. You're
the hero. Ange, just go. Take the
kids and go.

(a beat)

I'm gonna be fine. I'll go to
another shelter or something.
Please, it's been a long day. Just
go. We'll figure it out.

A beat.

ANGELA

Okay.

Angela doesn't want to go without him, but she knows she has
no choice. She hugs Frank.

Frank turns to Justin and holds out his hand for a high five.

FRANK

Uptown, midtown, downtown.

Justin doesn't high five him.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

JUSTIN
I'm not going.

FRANK
You gotta go. You gotta take care
of your mother and sister. You're
the man of the house when I'm not
around.

Justin looks at Luis, then back at Frank. He stands firm.

JUSTIN
(to Frank)
I'm staying with you.

FRANK
That's big of you, but you don't
have a choice.

JUSTIN
I got a choice. If you're not
going, I'm not going.

ANGELA
Justin, get in the car.

JUSTIN
No.

ANGELA
Get in the car!

Justin doesn't move.

ANGELA (CONT'D)
You can't stay. He's going to
another shelter. It'll be too
dangerous.

Justin stares at Frank. Taking the lesson he was taught...

JUSTIN
(poignant)
I'm not afraid.

ANGELA
Frank, will you tell him to come!
Christina's freezing out here.

Frank and Justin share a moment, eyeing each other.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (3)

LUIS

Justin, why don't you listen to Mom
and come with us and you can see
Frank tomorrow?

JUSTIN

Why don't you get in the car and
leave us alone?

Angela eyes Justin.

LUIS

I'm your father, don't talk to me
that way.

JUSTIN

I'm staying with Frank.

Justin steps over to Frank and stands by his side. Frank
puts his arm around Justin.

Angela stands there, with a tough decision to make. She
stares at Luis, then at Frank, then at Justin. A long beat.
Then, she decides.

ANGELA

Fine. Let's go.

FRANK

Ange, you can go-

ANGELA

No, let's just go to another
shelter.

Justin lifts one of the bags.

ANGELA (CONT'D)

Put that down. We're not carrying
all this stuff around anymore.

JUSTIN

But my clothes and my toys are in
there.

ANGELA

You shoulda thought of that before
you opened your mouth.

(to Luis)

Sorry I called you and dragged you
out here.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (4)

LUIS

You are sorry. Look at what you're putting yourself and these kids through. For what? For him? He can't even afford to pay for an apartment. This is the man you keep my son away from me for? You're pathetic.

ANGELA

(to Justin and Frank)
Let's go.

Angela tosses her two next to a pile of garbage on the street. She starts walking away with Christina. Frank and Justin follow in tow.

Christina breaks away and runs over to their belongings. She grabs the bag of photos and runs back over to Angela. She can barely hold it. Frank grabs the bag from her and carries it. They walk down the street away from...

Luis - who gets in his car and drives away.

OMITTED

EXT. NEW SHELTER - NIGHT

Angela, Frank, Justin and Christina walk up to a new shelter. Justin carries the bag of photos. The shelter is packed with people waiting outside. Justin, Angela and Christina wait on the side. Frank walks over to a SHELTER ASSISTANT, who looks frazzled - she's dealing with a number of people.

FRANK

Hi, we're gonna need two beds.

SHELTER ASSISTANT

We're at capacity right now.

FRANK

I have two children.

SHELTER ASSISTANT

I'm sorry, but we're full.

FRANK

Are there any other places you can recommend?

SHELTER ASSISTANT

There's Most Precious Host.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

FRANK

We just came from there.

SHELTER ASSISTANT

There's nothing else around here.
You can try Brooklyn - I heard
there are some beds available out
in Fort Greene. But they might be
full by now. It's the busiest
night of the year.

Frank turns and walks back to Angela.

SHELTER ASSISTANT (CONT'D)

(announces)

Everyone, can I have your attention
- we are full for the evening. I
need you to clear this walkway.

Frank walks back over to his family.

ANGELA

Now what?

Frank starts to crack. He's tired and frustrated - tears
start to pour from his eyes. Frank turns away. He doesn't
want them to see him crying. Angela steps in front of him.

ANGELA (CONT'D)

Hey, whatta are you doing?

FRANK

Nothing.

ANGELA

Remember our pact?

Frank quickly composes himself. He lifts Christina and
begins to walk away. Justin and Angela in tow, and they walk
down the street.

OMITTED

INT. TURNSTILE - SUBWAY STATION - NIGHT

Frank, Angela, Justin and Christina walk down into the empty
station. They walk toward the turnstile.

FRANK

At least we'll be warm.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

However, when they arrive at the turnstile there is a uniformed POLICE OFFICER standing on the other side. He is on duty in the station.

Frank and Angela stop and stare at the Officer.

The Officer stares back. Waves.

OFFICER
Merry Christmas.

Frank and Angela wave back.

FRANK
Great. Next subway is ten blocks away.

A beat.

ANGELA
Justin, go under.

FRANK
Ange-

ANGELA
Justin, go under.

JUSTIN
But there's a cop-

Angela ducks under the turnstile herself. She stares straight at the Officer with a steely resolve. Then, she looks back at Frank.

ANGELA
Give me Christina.

Frank, hesitant, hands Angela Christina.

ANGELA (CONT'D)
Come on Justin.

Justin looks at Frank.

FRANK
Listen to your mother.

Justin, nervous, ducks under the turnstile.

Frank is the last one left. He looks at the Officer.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

The Officer stares back - seeing their condition, nods his head and let's them slide.

Frank quickly ducks under. They walk toward the stairs and past the Officer.

ANGELA
(to Officer)
Thank you.

INT. SUBWAY PLATFORM - NIGHT

A train pulls into the station. Headed to Brooklyn. Doors open. Frank, Angela, Justin and Christina enter the empty, heated subway car.

INT. TRAIN CAR - SUBWAY - NIGHT

Frank, Angela, Justin and Christina sit in an empty car. Long, tired faces on them all. As the train rocks back and forth, Angela closes her eyes.

Frank is depleted, of energy, of self esteem - he's vacant.

Justin reaches into his pocket. He pulls out some tissues, along with the candy bar he stole earlier in the day. Justin blows his nose.

Justin stares at his parents. Then, he unwraps the candy bar. Breaks off a small piece.

A beat.

Justin tosses the piece of chocolate and hits Frank in the head.

FRANK
What the hell you doing?

JUSTIN
(quietly)
Playing a game.

FRANK
Well, it's not funny.

Angela opens her eyes.

Justin breaks off another piece of the candy bar and throws it at Frank again. This time - hitting him in the shoulder.

FRANK (CONT'D)
Cut it out.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Christina smiles. Angela sees what he's trying to do.

ANGELA
Throw me a piece.

Justin break off a piece and aims for Angela's mouth. He throws. It goes over her head.

Christina laughs.

JUSTIN
Sorry. Bad throw. One more try.

Justin breaks off another piece, aims and throws again. He misses.

Christina laughs, looking up at Frank.

Suddenly, Frank also realizes what Justin is trying to do - taking a page out of his book. Frank smiles.

FRANK
(to Justin)
You got the worst aim.

CHRISTINA
I wanna try.

FRANK
Give the bar to Christina. I bet she has better aim than you.

JUSTIN
Yeah right.

Justin hands Christina the candy bar.

ANGELA
(to Christina)
Just break off a small piece baby.

Christina breaks off a small piece.

ANGELA (CONT'D)
Now aim for your brother's mouth.

JUSTIN
Wait, it has peanuts in it.

ANGELA
So?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

JUSTIN
I'm allergic.

ANGELA
No you're not. That's what I told
you because you always ate too many
and made yourself sick.

JUSTIN
I'm not allergic?

ANGELA
No.

Justin looks at Frank.

FRANK
Don't look at me.

JUSTIN
That ain't right.

A beat.

ANGELA
Christina, aim for his mouth.

Christina pulls her arm back, aims and throws. The candy
lands right in Justin's mouth.

Christina laughs. Angela and Frank cheer for her.

ANGELA (CONT'D)
Great throw.

FRANK
(to Justin)
See, I told you she had better aim
than you.

Frank winks at Justin, signalling that he's done a good job.

Justin winks back.

Then, Frank mouths the words, "Love you," to Justin.

Justin sees it. Lowers his head. A little embarrassed, and
not sure how to respond. But there's appreciation all over
his face.

CHRISTINA
I wanna do it again.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (3)

ANGELA
Go ahead sweetie.

Frank and Angela look at each other.

Angela smiles.

Frank smiles back. He reaches out and puts his arm around her. She rests her head on his shoulder.

In this moment, we know exactly why and how this family will survive. No matter where they go, or what happens, good or bad, there is no denying their love for each other.

Christina throws another piece of candy at Justin. He catches it.

As this game continues on, the train rides out of the dark tunnel and heads up into an elevated train tracks, flooding the train car with light.

The train pulls into a station, above the ground. The doors open.

EXT. ELEVATED TRAIN STATION - DAWN

From the platform, we see Frank, Justin, Angela and Christina laughing.

The train doors close. The train pulls out of the station. The CAMERA PANS as the train rides off into the dawn. In the background, we see a peaceful morning New York city skyline. As the train disappears into the distance, we...

FADE TO BLACK: