A COLUMBIA PICTURES, LAWRENCE GORDON PRODUCTION

HARD TIMES (c. 2)

Produced By
Lawrence Gordon

Directed By
Walter Hill
This story is true in most details.
The names have been changed.
Not much else.
It has no moral.

LOUISIANA

1936
PART ONE

After all, characters are best explained through their behavior.

Old Welsh saying

Talk's cheap.

Old American saying
HARD TIMES

1 TRAIN

passing slowly into a switching yard.

2 CHANEY

standing in an open boxcar.

3 GRAVEL ROAD

Old pickup truck stopped, waiting as the train slides by.

Two children in the rear of the truck.

One of them, a ten-year-old boy, stands and watches the train.

He sees Chaney.

Their eyes hold on one another.

4 CHANEY

as the boy and truck disappear from his eyeline.

Boxcars stand empty in the switchyard beyond.

5 TRAIN

Blast of steam.

Cars slam against their couplings as the engine continues to decelerate.

6 CHANEY

grasping a ladder on the boxcar siding.

The city of Baton Rouge sliding before him.

He jumps.

Lands standing in a gravel bed.

The train moves past.
INDUSTRIAL SIDING
Smokestacks.
Old brick.
Chaney moving by stationary boxcars.
Chewing a matchstick.
Black duffel bag over one shoulder.

CUT.

DINER
Chaney enters.
WAITRESS with a stained apron.
Chaney stands at the counter.

CUT.

CHANENY
still at the counter, reading a paper.
Empty chili bowl.
A warehouse across the way.
A few cars drive up.
Men begin to file inside the building.
Chaney watches, looks to the Waitress, points at his empty coffee cup.

WAITRESS
Third refill costs you a nickel.

Chaney gets up.
Puts a nickel on the counter.
Walks out.

CUT.
INSIDE THE WAREHOUSE  
NIGHT

Dark. Shadow-crossed.

A group of men -- some seated, some standing, all of them expectant.

FOUR MEN

stand at the center.

Two of the men are opponents -- big physical types dressed in work clothes. They eye one another cautiously, paying little attention to whoever happens to be speaking.

SPEED

A man past the first flush but who still possesses great energy.

Speed moves toward the onlookers.

SPEED

Two fifty on the scratch. Now I need somebody to hold it. How about you, friend...

An OAF comes forward, takes the money.

SPEED


VOICE

Fifty. You're in.

SPEED

Got it.

VOICE

Twenty-five.

SPEED

Okay, twenty-five. One-seven-five left.

Silence.

(CONTINUED)
CONTINUED:

SPEED
Nobody wants to bet against my hitter.

Silence.

SPEED
We gotta start selling tickets.

CAESARE moves near Speed.

Small and energetic, he drums up business on the other side.

CAESARE
Three on my side. I got three.

VOICE
Thirty.

CAESARE
Right.

VOICE
Ten. I got ten.

CAESARE
Biggies... Anybody...

A few more bets, then complete silence.

VOICE
I'll take fifteen.

CAESARE
Real spenders, real highrollers... we got here... You had your chance.

Speed walks over to his man.

Speed turns.

SPEED
Okay. We're ready over here.

CAESARE
Just remember, anything but hitting when the man is down. I don't want your boy claiming he don't know the rules... Let him go.

(CONTINUED)
12 CONTINUED: (2)
Speed leans over his hitter's shoulder.

SPEED
All right now -- you want it -- you gotta want it... All right, go get it.

13 THE TWO FIGHTERS
approach each other.
Both open and raise their palms.
Hold for a moment.
No weapons or rings.
They drop their arms.
Fighting positions.
One gets off an overhand right.

14 CHANEY
in the shadows.
watching.

15 THE FIGHTERS
Speed's man tries a kick.
Gets knocked backward for his trouble.
Grapple.
Hair pull.
Powerful men but without grace.
Brawlers.
Punch.
Kick.
Punch.

(CONTINUED)
CONTINUED:
Chancery.
Gouge.
Speed's man takes several shots.
Goes down on his back.
It's not going to be his night.

CHANKEY
watching.

CUT.

OYSTER BAR

Midnight crowd.

Speed, alone, finishing a dozen on the half-shell.

Reading the Police Gazette.

Speed rises, sets aside his tabloid, moves to the help-yourself-and-eat-all-you-want-for-thirty-cents counter.

SPEED
Hey, buddy -- I think I can use about six more of those... and another lemon.

SPEED
gets his tray filled, turns back, sees:

CHANKEY
sitting at his table.

AT THE TABLE

Speed takes his seat, again picks up his paper.

After a moment.

(CONTINUED)
CONTINUED:

SPEED
You can start anytime, pal.

CHANNEY
Chaney.

SPEED
So what.

CHANNEY
We can make some money.

SPEED
Right. I'm all ears, friend.

He continues to eat.

CHANNEY
That piece of business tonight.
You set it up.

SPEED
Happens all the time.

Chaney takes an oyster.

SPEED
Help yourself.

CHANNEY
Thanks.

SPEED
I suppose you been down the long hard road.

CHANNEY
Who hasn't.

SPEED
Jail?

CHANNEY
What're you -- a policeman?

SPEED
I just like knowing where a man comes from.

Wait.

(CONTINUED)
CONTINUED: (2)

Chaney looking directly at Speed.

SPEED
Well, you look a little past it, friend. Besides, I already got a hitter.

CHANNEY
I saw him.

SPEED
Son of a bitch quit on me tonight. Look, friend... Every town's got a bar and every bar's got somebody in it that thinks he's as tough as a nickel steak. But they always look to Speed for the old dough-re-mi. If he's a bum -- I lose.

Chaney takes out some money.

CHANNEY
I don't want your dough... I got six bucks and nothing else. You bet it.

CUT.

WAREHOUSE
FOLLOWING NIGHT

Speed and Caesare standing at the center.

Chaney and Caesare's hitter eye one another.

CAESARE
Well... well... well, my old friend Speed's back with another potential winner. Any of you want to bet my man?

VOICE
Not after last night.

CAESARE
... anybody... Somebody... Looks pretty good to me... I'll give two to one... Three to one...

(CONTINUED)
CONTINUED:

Silence.

CAESARE
Come on, those kind of odds don't come around every day...

Silence.

CAESARE
Guess you boys aren't as dumb as he is.

Speed moves up.

SPEED
One-five-oh in the pot. Here, hold this again. I got the same for anybody that expects a repeat.

VOICE
Fifty.

VOICE
Twenty.

VOICE
Forty.

SPEED
I'll take it. All of it.

VOICE
You're crazy, man.

SPEED
You betting. I got fifteen left.

VOICE
I'll do it.

SPEED
Amazing courage. You're on.

Speed reaches into his pocket.

He looks over at Chaney.

SPEED
I got another six bucks. It's all I got. Who wants it.
CONTINUED: (2)

VOICE
I'll fade it.

SPEED
Big time gambling man there.

The oaf again holds the money. All buck teeth.

Speed moves next to Chaney.

SPEED
I did my part, pal. He's all yours.

Crowd yelling derision at Chaney.

CAESARE'S FIGHTER
Hey, pops, ain't you a little old for this.

Chaney drops his coat.

Silence.

The two hitters move out.

Palms up.

Caesare's man comes forward.

Chaney feints, hits him once.

Once is enough.

Out like a match.

SPEED

He's just seen the answer to a gambling man's prayers.

CUT.

PULLMAN CAR

Passengers reading, sleeping.

SOUND of WHEELS OVER TRACK.
CHANEY
sits quietly at the rear of the car.
Relaxed, watching.
His black leather duffel bag on the seat opposite.
Speed is next to him counting out the winnings.

SPEED
Just like anything else in this world, got to have money to make money. Here's your twelve and ten to have a little fun on... We got lots of time to work out our official deal. We're going to get plenty more where this came from, don't worry about that... New Orleans... Speed's coming home.

Big smile.
Speed takes a pull from a flask he has removed from his coat pocket.
Offers a shot to Chaney.
Declined.
Speed maintains his grin.
A real flash of the ivories.

SPEED
Here we come. High, wide and handsome.

THE CONDUCTOR
passes, makes his way to the front of the car, disappears beyond.

CHANEY
pulls his cap down.
Closes his eyes.
The train rumbles through the night.

CUT.
27 TRAIN STATION - NEW ORLEANS MORNING

The overnight limited pulls into the depot, glides to a halt.

WHISTLE BLAST and a lurch.

28 CHANEY

carries his bag, moves down the gangway with a few scattered passengers and onto the main concourse.

Speed at his side.

    SPEED
    I'll give you a ride -- I've got a big Packard, lots of room... I like a big car.

29 TRACKSIDE

Chaney and Speed are approached by an attractive young WOMAN.

    SPEED
    Hello, Sugarplum.

A light kiss to Speed's cheek.

One eye on Chaney.

    WOMAN
    How'd it go, Speedy.

    SPEED
    Rough start but a fast finish.

    WOMAN
    How much.

    SPEED
    Even.

She's got a talent for sarcasm.

    WOMAN
    Wonderful.

(CONTINUED)
CONTINUED:

SPEED
Always be pleasant around strangers,
Gayleen... This is Mr. Chaney.
Chaney, Gayleen Schoonover, my
permanent fiance.

GAYLEEN
I'm pleased to meet you, Mr.
Chaney.

Chaney nods to her.

They walk.

CHANNEY
I'll just say goodbye here.

SPEED
Wait a minute. We got plans to make...

CHANNEY
I just want to feel my way around
the city.

SPEED
What about our partnership.

CHANNEY
I don't like to rush things.

SPEED
Don't like to rush things. Look,
we got a deal. Jesus Christ.
What are you talking about.

GAYLEEN
Always be pleasant around strangers,
Speed.

Wait.

GAYLEEN
Are we going to see you again,
Mr. Chaney.

CHANNEY
I might turn up.

Chaney walks away.

(CONTINUED)
CONTINUED:  (2)

SPEED
Son of a bitch.

Shouts after him.

SPEED
Hey, Royal Street. Number 17.
Look me up, ya hear.

Chaney keeps walking.

GAYLEEN
Who was that guy.

SPEED
I'll tell you who he is. Money on the hoof.

CUT.

A DOOR
DAY

being opened by an elderly MAN; looking back over his shoulder, he can see Chaney, holding his black valise, standing at the top of a staircase.

Chaney walks past the Man and into the room.

THE ROOM

Gray walls.

Bare wood floors.

Small bed.

Night table.

Two hardwood chairs and a small table at the center.

Nothing else.

Nothing.

Chaney looks the place over as the Old Man starts his sales pitch.  

(CONTINUED)
CONTINUED:

OLD MAN
It looks a little rougher than
it is. But you get a lot of sun
through the window... Fix the
place up, it could be real nice.

Chaney tosses his duffel bag on the bed.

OLD MAN
I got some furniture down in
the storage room you could use.

CHANNEY
I like it the way it is.

Chaney crosses to the window, looks down to the street
below.

A Skiffle band playing across the street.
Harmonica, trombone, tambourine and a dancer.

OLD MAN
Buck and a half a week... in
advance.

Chaney digs into his pocket and gives the Man some cash.

The Old Man looks at the money, pockets it with a gesture;
places a key on the center table and walks out of the
room.

A blade fan overhead.

Chaney looks at it.

Flips the switch.

Doesn't work.

He walks to the middle of the room, reaches up, twirls
the blade.

It begins to turn.

Chaney seats himself on the edge of the bed.

Somebody's playing a RADIO nearby.

CUT.
THE PEARL RESTAURANT

Cafeteria style.

Few customers.

The COUNTERMAN idly smokes a cigarette; white t-shirt under his apron. He reads a paperback Western.

Chaney catches the Counterman's attention by rapping his knuckles sharply on the divider.

CHANEY
Hey -- gimme a cup of coffee.
Black.

MAN
That's all.

CHANEY
That's it.

Chaney looks around the room.

At one of the back tables he sees:

LUCY SIMPSON

Eccentrically attractive but with querulous, doubting eyes.

A bit shopworn for her years.

Chaney suddenly looms over her.

CHANEY
Mind if I sit down.

Chaney's eyes meet hers.

CHANEY
Sorry.

He turns away.

LUCY
Hey, I'm just having a cup of coffee. I don't own the chair.

Chaney sits down. She avoids his look.

(CONTINUED)
CONTINUED:

CHANLEY
You want to talk, or you just want to sit.

LUCY
Maybe I'm waiting for somebody. You think of that.

CHANLEY
Maybe you are.

LUCY
I am.

CHANLEY
What's your name.

LUCY
Lucy.

CHANLEY
Who you waiting for.

LUCY
Waiting for someone to buy me another cup of coffee...

CHANLEY
Here -- have mine...

He pushes his cup across to her.

CHANLEY
You live around here.

LUCY
Didn't take you long to get around to that one.

CHANLEY
I thought maybe I might walk you home.

LUCY
Not likely.

CUT.
Walking down a dark street bordered by rows of peeling Victorians -- now converted into rooming houses.

Some late-nighters are sitting out on the open porches.

LUCY
A girl had two choices in my home town, stay and be bored or move out and take your chances.

CHANÉY
How's your luck been running.

LUCY
Why, how can you ask that. Look how good I'm living.

They stop in front of one of the Victorians.

CHANÉY
I've seen worse.

LUCY
Depends on what you're looking for. What about you.

CHANÉY
I don't look past the next bend in the road.

They move up on the porch.

Two doors on either side of the entrance.

CHANÉY
You want me to come up.

LUCY
No, I don't.

CHANÉY
You sure.

LUCY
Look, thanks for the walk but it's not that easy. I've got a husband in jail, no job, and no prospects. I think that's enough trouble in my life right now. And letting you into my place means trouble.

(CONTINUED)
CONTINUED:

CHANNEY
I wasn't planning on bothering you.

LUCEY
What was your plan.

Wait and a smile.

CHANNEY
Maybe I'll see you around.

She smiles.

LUCEY
Maybe.

Chaney turns away; she goes through the door.

CUT.

SPEED

seated on his apartment balcony.

Newly risen despite the midday hour, he has merely attired himself with a pair of trousers.

Speed's early morning activity: he makes crayon-pencil circles on potential winners in the Daily Racing Form.

GAYLEEN

sleeping in the apartment's Murphy bed.

SPEED

continues working his form chart.

DOORBELL.

Speed rises, stretches, moves to the balcony rail.

STREET BELOW

Chaney looking up at Speed.
SPEED
This isn't the worst thing that's ever happened to him.

SPEED
Jesus H. Christ.

CUT.

APARTMENT DOOR
Speed lets Chaney into the flat.

SPEED
Good to see you, pal. I'm mighty glad you found time to drop by...

Chaney looks the place over.
A real dump.
Speed's all smiles.

SPEED
Come on out, we'll get things started right.

They walk past Gayleen, still sleeping in the bed.

SPEED
Don't mind Sleeping Beauty; she's not one to rush into a day's work.

Shouts.

SPEED
Are you, Goddamn it. We got an important quest. Now, how about some breakfast around here.

Gayleen raises her head.

GAYLEEN
Mornin'...

Falls back into sleep.

BALCONY
Speed leads Chaney outside.
seated at the balcony table.

Speed is still mumbling about Gayleen.

SPEED

Christ on a crutch...

He turns to Chaney.

SPEED

I suppose you want to talk deal.
We go fifty-fifty on scratch bets
and expenses. Side bets I keep
seventy-five percent. That's how
it works.

Chaney stares at him.

Speed lights up a cigarette.

CHANEE

Sixty-forty in my favor on scratch.
Side bets down the middle.

SPEED

I'm telling you the going rate.
What's normal. Ask anybody.

CHANEE

We'll do things different.

SPEED

Why should we.

CHANEE

Right now you got a percentage
of nothing.

Chaney stands up.

Starts to leave.

SPEED

That makes me even with you...
I'm putting up all the money,
taking all the risks.

Chaney turns.

Looks at Speed.

(CONTINUED)
CONTINUED:

SPEED
All right, pal. We'll do it your way.

Speed gives a shout into the next room.

SPEED
What does a man have to do to get some breakfast around here.

Continued silence from the woman of the house.

SPEED
You know, I got a great feeling about this -- we can make some real money. I'll try to get something set up for next week. But we'll go in slow... Five, six hundred...

CHANey
There's something I want you to know. I just came here to make some money and fill in some in betweens...

SPEED
In betweens. Hell, that's no living.

CHANey
It suits me. When I get enough change in my pocket, I'm gone.

CUT.

RIVER LANDING

Tugboat moored alongside a barge.

A tightly compressed crowd gathered around and above the flat-bed.

SPEED AND CHANEY

stand well back among the spectators.

Speed uses his confidential voice.

(CONTINUED)
CONTINUED:

SPEED
We'll put this down to research, part of your education.

CHICK GANDIL
A young man, mid-thirties, well dressed.
He possesses a touch of the light about him.
Seated on a high chair near the center.

THE TWO OPPONENTS
A swarthy man stands bare-chested; Gandil's hitter, a huge bald man, JIM HENRY, stands smiling across the way.
Caesare is working the shit; he moves into his pitch.

CAESARE
Any more bets on Nick here... Last call. Bets.

GANDIL
I'm laying five to one.

CAESARE
He's giving five to one on Jim Henry. Let's hear it. Can't get any better than that.

A shout and a smile from Jim Henry.

JIM HENRY
I want to have a long talk with anybody betting against me.

SPEED AND CHANEY
settle into the crowd.

SPEED
I'm going to cast some bread upon the waters.

Shouts.

(CONTINUED)
CONTINUED:

SPEED
A hundred against Curly.

Gandil looks at Speed.

SPEED
On a marker.

CAESARE
No markers.

SPEED
Chick, boy...

Gandil continues to look at Speed, then back at his own man.

GANDIL
Take it.

CAESARE
Five hundred to a hundred on a marker. Who else? Anyone.
Last call.

VOICE
Fifty.

ANOTHER VOICE
Start 'em.

CAESARE
Fifty. Last call. All right.
Get down to it.

Palms up.

Jim Henry slams the swarthy man against the bulkhead, then pursues him with measured intent.

Knocks him down.

No contest.

Knocks him down again.

SPEED
That's why he's the best.

Crowd shouting.

(CONTINUED)
CONTINUED:  (2)

SPEED

Nobody's beat him. Not many want to try.

CHANLEY

Who's the sharpie over there...

SPEED

Chick Gandil. One of the biggest money-belts in town. Born alongside the old silver spoon. That son of a bitch has broke me out three times... And he's the one we're going to shake.

The SOUND of FISTS striking home.

CUT.

INSIDE BLACK PENTECOSTAL CHURCH

A small congregation.
All of them singing.
Choir at the front letting go on a spiritual.

SPEED

moves down the aisle, eyes searching...
He sees a man huddled up alone on one side of the pews.
Other than Speed, he is the only white man on the premises.
Speed whistles at him.
No response.

SPEED

Poe, ssst.

POE

looks up.

(CONTINUED)
CONTINUED:

Small, loose-jointed, he has the appearance of a riverboat gambler whose luck has disappeared.

Assuming it was ever there.

Speed nods toward the rear door.

Poe rises.

GRAVEYARD CORRIDOR

Speed's car parked behind.

Some of the dear departed buried in the wall lining the corridor, others in raised graves beyond the path.

SPEED

What the hell you doing in there.

SOUNDS from the church continue.

POE

I've always been a student of comparative religion. The Pentecostals present a number of points of interest.

SPEED

How much doping you doin'...

POE

This month my financial condition has prevented certain journeys of the imagination.

SPEED

Good, because we're back in business. There's someone I want you to meet.

CHANET

at one end of the corridor.

Poe and Speed move to him.
SPEED
Chaney, this is Poe. Like I
told you, he's good. Takes care
of broken noses, cut eyes, all
the hurts and pains...

POE
I've got two years of medical
school to recommend me.

CHANNEY
Two years doesn't make a doctor.

POE
While in the third year of my
studies a small black cloud
appeared on campus... I left
under it.

SPEED
What he's saying is, he was a
dyed in the wool hophead...

POE
I have a weakness for opium.

Chaney looks at Poe.

Smiles.

CHANNEY
That's a habit that's hard to
quit.

POE
A victim of circumstance. Some
are born to fail, others have it
thrust upon them... Could I see
your hands.

Takes Chaney's hands.

POE
No protruding knuckles. No
calcium deposits. Make a fist.
More area to absorb the concussion
of a blow without breaking. Simple
matter of engineering stress.
CONTINUED: (2)

SPEED
Oh yeah, good hands.

Poe looks at Chaney's face.

POE
Skin looks reasonably thick...
I'd say there's a good chance
that you're not what Speed, with
an unfortunate turn of phrase,
refers to as a 'bleeder.'

SPEED
Like I told you, he's good. He
knows his stuff.

CHANLEY
How much.

SPEED
Ten percent of what we win,
plus expenses. It's the standard.

Chaney decides.

Poe and Chaney shake hands.

CUT.

STAIRCASE
CHANLEY moves up the stairwell.
A cat under one arm, grocery bag under the other.

ON THE LANDING
He puts the cat into the top of the grocery bag and with
his free hand unlocks the door to his room.

INSIDE THE ROOM
Chaney stands in the bleak kitchen area.
Sink, icebox, hotplate.

(CONTINUED)
CONTINUED:
Chaney empties the grocery sack onto the shelves.
Canned soup, lunch meat, loaf of bread, milk.
Chaney puts some milk into a bowl and places the bowl on the floor.

CUT.

THE CAT
finishes eating, preens.

CHANNEY
watches the cat a moment...
Then moves over to the bed.
Takes fifty-six dollars out of his wallet.
Counts the money.

CUT.
PART TWO

they speak whatever's on their mind
they do whatever's in their pants
the boys i mean are not refined
they shake the mountains when they dance

e.e. cummings
58  FACTORY AREA

Chaney, Speed and Poe walk through a pipe and tank yard.

    POE
    Well, Speed, I see you have
    secured employment for us in
    another romantic part of town.

Speed looks at Chaney.

    SPEED
    Sorry about that but opponents
    are harder and harder to come
    by... You don't mind fighting
    Black do you.

    CHANEY
    Just so long as the money's green.

    SPEED
    That's exactly the way I look
    at it.

    CUT.

59  FIGHT AREA  DAY

Chaney and Poe stand watching.

Crowd behind and around them.

Speed at the center.

He looks over at the opponent and his HANDLER.

    HANDLER
    Any takers... any takers...

    VOICE
    Fifteen. Fifteen.

    HANDLER
    Covered.

Speed hands the pot-bet to a bystander.

    SPEED
    Listen, I got a few bucks here
    for anybody that wants to bet
    against my man Chaney... Two to
    one.

(CONTINUED)
CONTINUED:

No takers.

SPEED
Come on, Christ's sake. Two to one.

Silence.

SPEED
Jesus, you folks are rough on somebody trying to make a buck. Okay, three to one. Three to one. Come on up and get it.

Still no takers.

SPEED
Four to one.

More silence.

HANDLER
Looks like they ain't biting, Speed. I got all mine laid out. You folks about ready?

Speed shrugs, walks back to Chaney and Poe.

Speed looks at Chaney.

Chaney begins to take off his coat, shirt and cap.

SPEED
Well, we're only in for the pot-bet.

POE
The price of success.

SPEED
Look, you know you could carry this smoke for a while. Take a few here and there... put on a real good show. Might get us some takers next time.

Chaney looks very hard at Speed.

CHANNEY
Don't ever ask me that.

(CONTINUED)
Chaney goes out.

POE
What a dismal idea. Especially
when one's own face isn't involved.

Speed shoves Chaney's cap into Poe's arms.

SPEED
What's the matter with you.

The opponent moves up to meet Chaney.

Palms up.

After a spirited struggle, Chaney batters the bigger man
into submission.

He returns and begins to put on his shirt and coat.

Speed and he exchange looks.

Speed's features are downcast.

The pot-bet man walks over to Speed.

Hands him the money.

HANDLER
That's a lot of money for a
couple of minutes' work.

SPEED
Not nearly enough.

CUT.

Speed comes in the front door, looks around.

A large man steps in front of him.

SPEED
LeBeau here...
CONTINUED:
Two men are seated at the rear: LeBEAU and DOTY. LeBeau is not the kind of guy you fool with. Someone once said you could strike a match on him. Doty is his flunky. Does the talking but doesn't make the decisions. Speed's eyes on LeBeau. The man takes Speed to LeBeau's table.

SPEED
I need a short-termer, a thousand.

DOTY
That's a heavy taste. How short.

SPEED
Day. Maybe two.

Doty looks at LeBeau.

Wait.

LeBEAU
I've done business with you before.

SPEED
About a year ago.

Wait.

SPEED
You got your money back.

LeBEAU
Yeah. You paid my three hundred back but you had to borrow from Hebert to do it. That one you didn't cover so well.

SPEED
So, three weeks over. Big deal.

LeBEAU
Closer to three months.

(CONTINUED)
CONTINUED:

Gayleen shouts at him through the window.

GAYLEEN
How long you going to be. I
don't feel like sitting out here
all day.

SPEED
Don't start complaining.

GAYLEEN
I just don't want you getting
catch up in any game in there.

SPEED
It's business.

CUT.

CORRIDOR
Speed approaches a large door.

ATHLETIC CLUB - POOLSIDE
DAY

Five towel-draped men playing draw poker.
One of them Chick Gandil.
A lot of money on the table.

Jim Henry, fully dressed, is seated at the back of the
room. Gandil looks up at Speed, then bumps for three
cards.

SPEED
Hello, Chickie.

GANDIL
How's my personal pigeon.

SPEED
Just stopped by to pay off my
marker.

Throws some money on the table.

(CONTINUED)
CONTINUED:

GANDIL
That's all right. We all make mistakes. I'd ask you to sit in
but it's a big game.

SPEED
I'm keeping a lady waiting out
there anyway.

MAN
Raise a hundred.

SPEED
Guess you heard I got a new hitter.

SECOND MAN
I'll see it.

GANDIL
Yeah, word gets around.

SPEED
I might even work him up to ape
man.

Jim Henry looks up.

GANDIL
There's no mystery about that.
My standard deal, just takes a
thousand dollars up front.

THIRD MAN
I call.

GANDIL
Nice pot... You making an offer.

SPEED
Well, my man's just starting.
A person would have to get real
long odds to mix with skinhead
over there.

Jim Henry's getting tired of the abuse.

His eyes flash at Speed.

GANDIL
Assuming you had the money, what
kind of odds are you talking about.

(CONTINUED)
SPEED
Five to one.
GANDIL
Three to one.
SPEED
Deal.

Speed throws the big roll of cash on the table.

Gandil looks at the greenbacks.

GANDIL
Somebody die and leave it to you.

SPEED
Three to one, Chickie. Money's on the table.

GANDIL
I don't like being hustled by a hope and prayer artist... You're not going to get in that cheap... The pot bet goes up to three thousand. Come back when you get that rich.

SPEED
You telling me we don't have a deal.

GANDIL
Not for a thousand.

Speed picks up his money.

SPEED
Nice meeting you, gentlemen.

Nods to Jim Henry.

SPEED
See you soon, Dempsey.

Heads for the door.

CORRIDOR

Speed shuts the door of the pool entrance and heads for the street.

(CONTINUED)
66 CONTINUED:

Big smile.

CUT.

67 BARBER SHOP

DAY

Speed has a bottle of beer in one hand, receiver in the other.

SPEED

... I'm feeling quite fine, Mr. Pettibon, quite fine... Uh, huh.
Where'd you find this gorilla.
Shook a few trees, I see...
Well, we got a new boy here, I
think could make you an interesting
contest... That's a lot of money,
Mr. Pettibon. I'm not sure my
hitter's up to all that... He's
just starting out, awful green
but real game...

Poe, getting a shave on a nearby barber chair, smiles at
Speed.

SPEED

Now, Mr. Pettibon, nobody can
take advantage of you Bayou
people, you know that. Just
name the time and place, we'll
be there... Okay, good talking
to you.

68 AT THE CHAIR

SPEED

I told you it would be a fat one.

POE

How high.

SPEED

Two thousand George Washingtons,
that high enough for you. Going
to pay some bills.

(CONTINUED)
CONTINUED:

POE
The dun at the door and the wolf
at the gate shall be held in
abeyance... You're all that sure
about Mr. Chaney?

SPEED
Does a goose go barefoot?... I'm
going to go get a cigar.

CUT.

A DIRT ROAD

As Speed's Packard blazes along the sunny countryside.

A BAYOU TOWN

Speed's Packard prowls up the main drag, turns...
The sidewalk and street are nearly vacant.

OPEN FIELD - CAJUN COUNTRY

Farm nearby.
A large barn on one side of the field.
Band playing.
Fish fry in progress.
Mules being auctioned.
A number of locals in attendance.
Speed drives up, winds his way through the citizens.

UNDER A HUGE SHADE TREE

The Packard comes to a halt.

Speed pushes the door open, gets out along with Poe and
Gayleen.

(CONTINUED)
CONTINUED:

A large man approaches.

SPEED
Good to see you, Mr. Pettibon.

PETTIBON
Good to see you, Mr. Weed. Look what we done for your visit here.

SPEED
Mighty fine. This is my fiancee, Gayleen Schoonover and you know Mr. Poe.

PETTIBON
Sure I remember... Nice to see you again, sir.

Pettibon takes a hard look at Chaney.

POE
That's Chaney. He don't say much.

PETTIBON
Things go to plan, he won't be saying nothing later.

SPEED
That's your plan, not ours.

PETTIBON
You said he was green.

SPEED
Third time out.

PETTIBON
Well, he don't look on the unpicked side to me, but guess I'll let my man be the judge of that... That's him right over there.

CAJUN MAN

seated off by himself.

Calm repose.
74  AT THE PACKARD
Speed gives the opponent a professional once-over.
By the look, he's a big, raw-boned country boy.

    POE
    He looks up to the mark.

    PETTIBON
    He'd better be. 'Course I could
go another direction, let you
folks take on a real test.

He gestures toward a cage.

    SPEED
    What'd you have in mind...

75  THE CAGE
Within it a large bear.

76  CHANEY
Chaney walks over to the bear.
The bear hurls himself against the bars.
Chaney watches every movement.

77  THE BEAR
Trying to get free.

78  AT THE PACKARD
Speed looking over at Chaney and the bear.

    SPEED
    That's an interesting idea you
got there, Pettibon.

    PETTIBON
    I thought it might catch your
fancy.

(CONTINUED)
CONTINUED:

POE
All things considered, we better stick to the two-legged one.
When do you figure on getting started.

PETTIBON
How about right now, Mr. Poe.

Wait.

Speed still watching Chaney and the bear.

SPEED
Let's do it.

CUT.

A CLEARING
Chaney and his entourage are faced with a cluster of men.

AMONG THE CAJUNS
Chaney's opponent.

SPEED, CHANEY AND POE
Chaney drops his coat.
Moves forward.

CUT.

SPEED
standing beside Poe, shouting at the top of his voice...

SPEED
Jesus, Jesus... Chaney, get him.

A big dog barks loudly near Speed.

CHANEY
working the Cajun, measuring, landing; each careful blow going home.
now falling backward, landing against several cotton bales; a finished hitter.

CHANey
turns away from the fallen man -- his job completed.

THE CROWD
Not pleased with the result.

SPEED
tosses Chaney his cap and coat.

POE
Very pretty. Very nice.

Chaney smiles.

CHANey
Better get the money.

SPEED
Nobody ever has to tell me about that.

Speed goes out into the center, now the cock-of-the-walk.

Pettibon's got a long face.

SPEED
Well that's how it's done, Pettibon. I guess this just wasn't your day.

PETTIBON
Damn small question about that.

Speed reaches for the money being held in Pettibon's hand. But Pettibon doesn't let go.

SPEED
What the hell you doing.

(CONTINUED)
CONTINUED:

PETTIBON
This has been a big setback for us... real big. I didn't think anybody could go through my man that way...

SPEED
Obviously an error in judgement on your part.

PETTIBON
It was too damned easy... like shooting birds off a telephone wire... Now Mr. Weed you said your man was just startin' out...

SPEED
There isn't any rules about anything except who wins. That money's ours.

Chaney moves up.

CHANNEY
Something wrong.

PETTIBON
We got a problem. You're a ringer, Mister Chaney.

Speed is now very close to Pettibon.

SPEED
You give us our goddamn money.

PETTIBON
You want the money, take it.

A man in the crowd behind Pettibon steps forward. He has a revolver in his waistband.

Chaney smiles.

POE
Somebody always shows up with a gun.

SPEED
You goddamn sack of country shit.

(CONTINUED)
POE
Steady on, Speed, these boys are not refined.

PETTIBON
I think you folks ought to get in your car and drive on back home.

CHANÉY
I think that's good advice.

Big smile from Pettibon.

PETTIBON
There's a man that's got some sense.

Speed looks at Chaney.

CHANÉY
He doesn't want to pay.

SPEED
Just okay, never mind, huh. That's what we're going to do. Nothing.

Speed turns back to Pettibon.

SPEED
Listen, next time I come to this coon ass parish I'll bring the goddamn gun.

PETTIBON
Well, you do that -- Better make it a great big one. Now get on out.

Pettibon smiles.

CUT.

THE PACKARD
Speed kicks the engine over, socks the car into gear.

(CONTINUED)
CONTINUED:

POE
A sorry spectacle. A very poor example of Southern sportsmanship.

GAYLEEN
All this driving for nothing. My God, breaks your heart.

SPEED
Breaks my butt, is what it breaks.

CHANey
Let's take things easy, drive around the back roads. See the sights.

SPEED
What the hell are you talking about.

CHANey
Business.

CUT.

ROADHOUSE
NIGHT
A pool game in progress.

JUKEBOX PLAYING.
Pettibon watches the game while talking to a blonde woman.
The Man with the revolver is belly up to the bar.
With startling impact a spanner wrench comes TEARING through the front plate glass window.
All voices stop, all eyes to the front of the bar.
Chaney comes through the back door.
He hits the Man with the pistol in the kidney -- flattens him with the punch.
Chaney rolls him over, pulls out the revolver.
He walks toward Pettibon carrying the pistol loosely at his side.

(CONTINUED)
CONTINUED:

One of the pool players swings at Chaney with his cue; Chaney twists out of the way as the cue shatters across the pool table.

He puts the pistol in his pocket, then hammers the pool player with three punches, dropping him like a lead weight.

CHANEX

Anybody else.

No takers.

Chaney faces the Cajun fighter, takes the pistol out again.

CHANEX

What about you.

The Cajun fighter shakes his head.

Chaney has moved near Pettibon.

Speed and Poe have opened the front door of the bar, they stand blocking the entrance.

CHANEX

I got the gun this time.

PETTIBON

Guess you do. But I'm not sure you want to use it.

Chaney swings the pistol in a tight circle, popping him on the side of the neck, sending Pettibon to the floor.

CHANEX

That's one way. Want to see another.

Pettibon hesitates, then throws his wallet to Chaney.

Chaney removes the money, puts it in his pocket, tosses the wallet aside.

Chaney looks at the pistol in his hand.

He walks slowly over near the entrance. Poe and Speed have moved back outside.

CHANEX

This your place, Pettibon...

(CONTINUED)
Chaney turns back to the room.
He again looks at the gun, then to Pettibon.
Chaney suddenly BLASTS out the glasses over the mantle. Everyone in the roadhouse hits the floor.
Chaney looks at Pettibon.
Chaney BLASTS out the bar mirror.
Chaney BLASTS an overhead light.
Chaney BLASTS the jukebox.
Chaney BLASTS the wall phone.
Sudden silence.
Chaney sees himself in a portion of the shattered bar mirror.
Chaney BLASTS his own image. Then looks at Speed and Poe outside.
Chaney tosses the gun into the middle of the floor, starts for the exit.

OUTSIDE THE ROADHOUSE
Chaney, Poe and Speed, walking as the Packard comes tearing up to them.
The car arrives.
They hop in.

WITHIN THE PACKARD
Gayleen accelerates away.

GAYLEEN
What the hell was all that shooting.
Chaney settles into the back seat, pulls his cap down, preparing for sleep.

(CONTINUED)
CONTINUED:

Speed holds the huge ball of money in front of her face.

SPEED
Jesus Christ.

GAYLEEN
A-men.

Poe begins to sing.

POE
As I walk along the Bois Boolong
with an independent air
You can hear the girls declare
'He must be a Millionaire.'

THE PACKARD

driving through the night.

POE
You can hear them sigh,
And wish to die,
You can see them wink the other eye
At the man that broke the Bank at
Monte Carlo.

CUT.

THE RIVER

as dawn breaks.

Boats on the water.

Skyline of New Orleans beyond.

CUT.

SPEED'S PACKARD

driving within the city.

Gayleen and Poe are sleeping.

CHANey
Over there.
LUCY'S STREET

Trash collectors going about their tasks.
The Packard rubbers to a halt. Chaney gets out.
Gayleen awakens.
Speed looks at Chaney through the car window.

GAYLEEN
That where you live?

Chaney gives her a glance, turns to Speed.

CHANNEY
See you in a few days.

SPEED
You know who's next.

GAYLEEN
My, my. If this isn't your place
then who's the lucky lady?

Chaney continues to ignore her. He starts for Lucy's porch.

GAYLEEN
You have a real big time now.

Chaney does not look back.
Speed sticks his thumb into the air.
The Packard rumbles away.

ON THE PORCH

Chaney rings the bell. Waits.
Rings again.
The door opens a crack, night chain holding it in place.

LUCY
Who is it.

CHANNEY
Chaney.

(CONTINUED)
CONTINUED:

She opens the door.

LUCY
What do you want.

CHANEY
Thought maybe you'd like to come out.

LUCY
You treating me to a champagne breakfast, or something.

CHANEY
Whatever you feel like.

LUCY
You know it's five a.m.

Wait.

LUCY
Christ, I barely know you.

CHANEY
Yeah, but would you like to.

They stand looking at each other.

LUCY
Why me.

CHANEY
Because we're the same. You don't want any trouble.

LUCY
I guess I can make some coffee.

He enters.

Door closes.

CUT.

CITY STREET

Shoeshine chair.

(CONTINUED)
Speed reading a paper while his shoes are being polished.

Rag popping.

Doty comes down the street and collects some money from the shoeshine boy.

    SPEED
    Hello, Doty.

    DOTY
    Speed...

Doty sits in the stand next to Speed.

    DOTY
    You know we haven't been seeing you around lately.

    SPEED
    You don't have anything going in the eighth, do you.

    DOTY
    A man that can afford a shoeshine sure ought to be able to pay his debts.

    SPEED
    I got to keep up appearances.

Wait.

    DOTY
    The way we figure it, you're overdue.

    SPEED
    For what... you pushing me. You're going to get your money.

    DOTY
    Sure we will.

    SPEED
    Look, I can give you two hundred right now.

He pulls out some bills.

(CONTINUED)
CONTINUED: (2)

Doty grabs Speed's hand...

DOTY
Keep it. He wants it all. Steal it, sell your sister, borrow it, but get it. LeBeau wants it all...

SPEED
Listen...

DOTY
Now.

SPEED
I need some time, pal. A couple of days... two days... I got something working. I can have it for you in two days.

DOTY
That better be a promise.

SPEED
You can bank on it.

CUT.

OUTDOOR RESTAURANT DAY
Filled to capacity.
Animated chatting.
Chaney and Lucy at a table placed against a brick wall.

LUCY
You haven't gotten around to telling me what you do.

Chaney doesn't answer.

LUCY
It's something that people generally ask.

CHANNEY
Worried I can't pay the check.

(Continued)
CONTINUED:

LUCY
No. I'm worried because you never answer any questions. Now tell me how you get money.

CHANLEY
I knock people down.

Wait.

LUCY
You mean like a prize fighter.

CHANLEY
Pick-up fights. Money's made on bets. It's just something I'm doing for a while.

LUCY
Funny way to make a living.

CHANLEY
Beats changing tires at the bus station for two dollars a day.

LUCY
What's it feel like to knock somebody down.

CHANLEY
Makes me feel a helluva lot better than it does him.

LUCY
That's a reason.

CHANLEY
There's no reasons about it. Just money.

CUT.

PRIVATE DINING ROOM

NIGHT

Crowded.

Chick Gandil and friends, all impeccably dressed, enjoying champagne and conversation.

(CONTINUED)
CONTINUED:

Speed bursts into the room, Poe at his heels.

SPEED
Hello, Chick, good to see you.
How's tricks.

Wait.

GANDIL
This is a private gathering. I
don't believe you gentlemen were
invited.

SPEED
You remember Poe here...

GANDIL
Mr. Poe...

SPEED
Only keep you a minute. Remember
last time I saw you, you set a
special number for that three to
one. I'm going to take you up
on that.

GANDIL
First you've got to have three
thousand real, whole dollars,
marker man. Otherwise, it's just
an academic question.

Speed flashes a roll.

SPEED
You want to count it.

CUT.

CHANES, SPEED AND POE
NIGHT
walk down a narrow, high corridor.

DOORWAY - POWERHOUSE

The trio emerges from the passageway, enter a maze of
walkways bordered by overhead windows.
MAIN FLOOR - POWERHOUSE
They pass by huge generators.

TURBINE ROOM
A huge crowd fills the tiers around and above a wire mesh cage.

Shouting and betting becomes more intense as Chaney, Speed and Poe arrive.

CHANNEY
Cap and coat still on, he enters the cage with his entourage.

He maintains a Samurai's silence.

SPEED
It's his big night.

For the occasion he's wearing a new suit; his fresh attire resembles that sported by men who sell toy boats on street corners.

Money in hand, he moves to the center.

GANDIL
Across the way with Jim Henry.

Big Jim rolls his shoulders.

Poe leans toward Chaney.

Poe
Been a few unfortunate fighters
busted their knuckles on that hard head of his...

Speed leans in.

Chaney stands, drops his coat and cap.

Speed turns toward the center.

(CONTINUED)
CONTINUED:

CAESARE

Bets in. Time. All bets in.

Jim Henry's eyes find Chaney.

He tries to stare him down.

JIM HENRY

Hey, old man, I'm going to end it for you.

SPEED

Just keep smiling, Jim. While you still got some lips.

JIM HENRY

When I get done with him I'm going to come after you, big shot.

SPEED

Only thing you'll be coming after is a doctor.

Speed now sotto voce to Chaney and Poe.

SPEED

Jesus... I just saw it. Nine thousand dollars in the man's hand. Takes your breath away.

Insult period completed, the crowd grows restive.

CAESARE

Let 'em work, start it. Get 'em going.

SPEED

We're ready over here.

Crowd yells.

Gandil is talking to Jim Henry.

Looks at Speed.

Gestures Jim Henry out.

Chaney takes two steps forward.

(CONTINUED)
CONTINUED:  (2)

Palms up.

Jim Henry closes the ground. Lunges. Misses.

Chaney stops him with a right hand. A stinger.

Hits him in the liver.

Another stinger.

Knocks Jim Henry back against the wall of the cage.

Jim Henry rebounds off and comes back into it. Lands one, gets hit, lands another.

Misses a kick.

The crowd pushes around the cage, all of them shoving for a better view.

Jim Henry gets a rhythm going; left hand, right hand, kick.

Reaches for Chaney's hair.

Chaney responds. Slides to his left, crosses, back, over hand right. His best shot.

Jim Henry stopped mid-stride.

Chaney hits him again.

Again.

Again.

Now fighting like a machine.

Finishes him with a left hand faint and a crisp eight-inch right.

Jim Henry slams backward.

Goes flat on his back.

Rolls over on his stomach.

Doesn't roll any further.

(CONTINUED)
Crowd very quiet.

SPEED
My, my, my, well, look at that...
Lying there like a dead man...
Hard to tell if we need an ambulance
or a hearse. Second thought,
somebody just go out and get a
wheelbarrow for Mr. Gandil's
hitter.

Gandil takes the pot-bet out of Caesare's hand then walks
over to Speed.

He's taken defeat with seeming calm.

Hands Speed the pot-bet.

GANIDIL
You've always had an unfortunate
way of putting things.

Speed gives him his best smile.

SPEED
Nothing personal, Chick.

Crowd noise picks up again.

Poe throws Chaney's coat over his shoulders.

Gandil and Chaney catch each other's eye.

CUT.

THE KING COTTON CLUB
NIGHT

Five-piece band blazing away.

Twenty or thirty couples dance in the middle of the room.

IN A SPACIOUS BOOTH

Celebration after victory.

Chaney, Lucy, Speed and Gayleen are having a few pops;
this point of the evening Speed is well oiled.
ON THE DANCE FLOOR

Poe has managed to come up with a date for the occasion.

She stands a head taller than the two-year medical student; together they dance with grace and vigor.

The number ends, Poe and his date head back to their table.

SPEED

leans in Chaney's direction.

SPEED
I got a message from Mr. Chick Gandil. He wants us to come up and have a little drink.

CHANENY
You handle it. I'm not interested.

SPEED
Come on, pal. He said us. Never hurt anything being polite.

DANCE FLOOR

as Poe and his date join the table crowd.

SPEED
Listen, Poe. We saw you out there. Smooth... real smooth.

POE
Thank you. Thank you. It's all in the partner you have.

SPEED
I'm going to make a toast. To the best man I know. To a mastermind. To the Napoleon of Southern sports. Me.

Drinks from his glass.

Looks at Gayleen.

SPEED
Come on Gayleen.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)
SPEED (CONT'D)
Let's get with those galloping dominoes. We'll see you all later...

Speed and Gayleen grab their coats and leave.

POE AND HIS DATE
Heads close together.

POE
I assume you realize that the blood of the fabled Edgar Allen courses through my veins.

POE'S GIRL
No, but it sure sounds like I'm going to hear about it.

POE
I understand that you and noble literature are strangers. But on the occasion of this celebration I shall treat you to a burst of my ancestor's genius... Hear the sledges with the bells/Silver bells. What a world of merriment their melody foretells. How they tinkle, tinkle, tinkle -- In the icy air of night. While the stars, that oversprinkle -- All the heavens, seem to twinkle -- With a crystalline delight; Keeping time, time, time -- In a sort of Runic rhyme, To the tintinnabulation that so musically wells -- From the bells, bells, bells, bells -- Bells, bells, bells...

The MUSIC grows louder.

CUT.

CRAP GAME
Speed rolling.

THAT NIGHT

(CONTINUED)
CONTINUED:

VOICES OVERLAPPING
Nine's point. Nine.

He craps out.

Speed can't believe it.

A hand takes an enormous pile of cash away from Speed.

Gayleen watching from across the crowded room.

SPEED
Son of a bitch.

VOICES
Put something up or pass the dice.

Wait.

SPEED
Son of a bitch.

VOICES
Push or shove.

He walks over to Gayleen.

Game continues behind him.

SPEED
Get your goddamn purse and coat.

GAYLEEN
You lost all of it.

SPEED
Shut up.

GAYLEEN
What. Sure, excuse me, Mr. High Roller. I should of known. Goddamn me for expecting anything else.

Speed just looks at her.

Not much a guy can say under these circumstances.

CUT.
PART THREE

There is a code of honor among pickpockets and among whores. It is simply that the standards differ.

Ernest Hemingway
BACK OF A FERRY

The boat is churning across the river on the afternoon run.

Muddy water.

Chaney and Speed at the rail.

SPEED
I mean to tell you the chickens have come home to roost when we got Gandil begging for mercy. Every once in a while something happens in life that's just too good to be true.

CHANNEY
How long an arm's he got.

SPEED
Gandil's a businessman. Always worried about his reputation. He's not going to try any muscle play.

Wait.

SPEED
But there's one thing we got to live with. Since you beat Jim Henry you're marked. From now on we'll have to give the odds. Fights are going to be hard to come by. Things are really going to get expensive. It's possible we could use Gandil.

CHANNEY
No need worrying about it. We're getting toward the end of things.

SPEED
What the hell does that mean.

Chaney flips his matchstick into the water.

CUT.

LOADING DÖCKS

Adjacent to the waterfront.

(CONTINUED)
CONTINUED:

Speed and Chaney walk past the raised concrete docks. Swampers about their work, unloading the fishing boats.

INSIDE THE WAREHOUSE

The two men move to the back of the large building and up the rear stairway toward the overhead office -- glass windows overlooking the rows of oyster shellers and fish-cleaning.

SPEED AND CHANEY

enter a small office.

Two SECRETARIES typing.

An accountant working his books.

SPEED
You can tell Gandil that Mr. Chaney and Mr. Weed are here to see him.

SECRETARY
He's expecting both of you. Just go right on in.

SPEED
Thank you, ma'am.

Jim Henry sits on a threadbare couch.

He looks at Chaney.

Still marked from the last time they met.

SPEED
How's your jaw, glass man.

Jim Henry ignores both of them as they move past.

INNER OFFICE

Spare, austere.

Gandil behind a desk.

(CONTINUED)
GANDIL
Glad you could drop by, Speed.

SPEED
Always a pleasure, Chick. You remember Chaney here.

They nod.

GANDIL
Sit down. Get comfortable. Have a drink.

SPEED
Thank you.

Speed has a seat. Chaney begins to prowl the room.

SPEED
No -- no. Little early for me.

GANDIL
All business.

SPEED
That's right, let's have it.

GANDIL
You've got a direct way of speaking.

A nervous moment.

SPEED
Don't let it upset you, Chick.

GANDIL
I like a man that's direct. Makes everything easy to understand. Like the old days. My father didn't win this business in a raffle, you know. He earned it.

SPEED
Chick -- we didn't come here for any history lesson. Let's get down to cases.

GANDIL
Maybe we should at that.

(CONTINUED)
CONTINUED: (2)

He produces an envelope, places it on the corner of his desk.

GANDIL
Five thousand dollars in this envelope. It's yours.

SPEED
I don't think I'm following the drift.

GANDIL
I'm buying half of Chaney. We'll do real well together.

SPEED
This comes a little bit quick.

GANDIL
Don't let it bother you. It's done. Pick up your money. We got a deal.

Chaney looks sharply at Gandil.

GANDIL
Just like buying a horse. We're partners. Fifty-fifty.

Chaney walks over.

CHANNEY
Talk to me, not him.

A long moment.

GANDIL
I had the best streetfighter in this city. Now I don't. I don't like that at all.

CHANNEY
We can get along without you.

GANDIL
Hooking up with me means more green for you. Bigger bets. Tell him, Speed.

(CONTINUED)
CONTINUED: (3)

SPEED
That part of it is true.

CHANEX
Like I said, we can get along
without you.

Wait.

GANDIL
I'm sorry to hear that, Mr.
Chaney. I like being associated
with the best. I hope you'll
come around to my way of thinking.

CUT.

OMITTED

WHOREHOUSE
NIGHT

Speed moves into the parlor, quickly looks the mer-
chandise over.

It's not exactly a classy joint.

EIGHT DOXIES

smiling at Speed.

A MADAM

closes in on Mr. Weed.

Like her employees, she wears a professional smile.

MADAM

Well, well, look who's back --
Ole Speed. You come to your
Mama Lois to have a good time.

SPEED

I sure did.
CONTINUED:

MADAM
I've got myself some lovely new girls.

She leads Speed into the parlor.

The girls all stand for approval.

MADAM
And Speed, each one's been especially trained to suit your fancy.

SPEED
Look, I don't need any sales pitch, Mama. I just came here to get my hat blocked.

MADAM
Take your pick.

CUT.

UPSTAIRS BEDROOM - WHOREHOUSE     NIGHT

Speed and a FLOOZY in the sack.

Having completed what they set out to do.

SPEED
What'd you say your name was.

FLOOZY
Carol.

SPEED
Carol, what'd you think of that.

CAROL
Hey, it was terrific. You were really great.

SPEED
You know something, that's exactly what I thought you would say.

CUT.
SPEED
wheeling his Packard up the street to his apartment.

STREET
Speed parks, shuts off the engine, gets out.

A BLACK
looking at Speed. He carries a sledgehammer. Doty stands nearby.
Wait.
The Black slowly walks by Speed.
The man slams the hammer across the Packard's fender.

SPEED
Hey -- what the hell...

Another hit.

SPEED
Hey, what's he doing, Doty.

Smash, smash, smash.

SPEED
No -- no... Oh, Jesus Christ. Hey, come on. Don't do that.

The Black looks at Doty.

BLACK
Is that okay, Doty.

Doty smiles.

DOTY
Talk to him.

The big man turns to Speed.

BLACK
Mr. LeBeau, he says he's got some business with you.

(CONTINUED)
CONTINUED:

He puts the business end of the sledge on Speed's shoulder.

BLACK
He don't want no trouble. Just
pay your debts. Okay, mister.

Hits the car again.

DOTY
You get the message.

The Black and Doty walk away.

Speed stands there.

CUT.

FERRY BOAT

Speed standing on deck.

He has a whiskey bottle in a brown paper bag.

Lifts it to his lips, drinks.

The ferry approaches the New Orleans side.

THE FERRY

being tied to the landing.

Speed walks off.

CHANLEY AND POE

stand waiting as Speed approaches.

Cars roar off the ferry and up the ramp behind.

POE

Hello, Speed.

SPEED

Good to see my old friends...
There's a few things that need discussing.

(CONTINUED)
CONTINUED:

They sit.

A long wait.

SPEED
I got to get something going in a hurry. Been thinking about that offer Gandil made us -- We ought to reconsider.

CHANey
Why the change of mind.

SPEED
I'm flat ass broke. I need some money fast.

CHANey
I don't like Gandil.

SPEED
That's no reason.

CHANey
It's reason enough for me.

SPEED
That's fine for you but it don't help my case a damn bit. If we don't go with Gandil, that means I got to borrow and my credit all over town is not too good. Can you loan me two thousand... That's what I need.

Wait.

Chaney gives him a long hard look.

CHANey
You made the same as me, dollar for dollar.

SPEED
That's the way you look at it.

CHANey
Yeah.

(CONTINUED)
SPEED
Well, the way I look at it you owe me.

CHANETY
How the hell do you figure that.

SPEED
We used my money to begin with, right. My contacts... You were nothing when I met you and you'd be nothing without me.

Chaney gives him a longer look.

CHANETY
Dumb.

Chaney rises and starts away.

SPEED
You sayin' no to me...

Speed jumps up after him, grabbing the bottle of whiskey from Poe.

SPEED
Chaney.

CHANETY
turns back to look at Speed.

Speed holds the neck of the bottle in his hand.

Chaney looks at him.

Speed throws the bottle down.

Chaney looks at him another moment then walks away.

POE
Damn... Hell. Now we're both in it.

CUT.
TRAIN STATION    NIGHT
Empty tracks.

RECEPTION PLATFORM
Gandil and Jim Henry stand waiting.

THE NIGHT SPECIAL
pulling into the station.
Steam blast.
Wheels lock.

PULLMAN CAR DOOR
A few passengers descend.
Among them a big man with the look of an athlete.
A very big man.
He carries a black leather duffle bag.

JIM HENRY
watches his successor.

GANDIL
Eyes like ice as STREET approaches.

GANDIL
Welcome to New Orleans, Street.
Street extends his duffle bag to Jim Henry.

JIM HENRY
I don't do that.
Street does not pull his arm away.
Jim Henry looks to Gandil.

(CONTINUED)
CONTINUED:

Gandil continues staring at Street.

Jim Henry takes the valise.  

CUT.

137 LUCY'S APARTMENT - KITCHEN  

NIGHT

Lucy cooking.
Chaney at the table.
Empty plate in front of him.
She looks at Chaney.

LUCY
You ever get scared when you do your work.

CHANLEY
I never think about it.

LUCY
The only thing you care about is the money. Isn't that right. Just so the money's good... I'll tell you what I think. I think you like it, standing out there in the middle and everything coming down on you. I think you love it.

Wait.

LUCY
Don't you...

CHANEY
You got any more questions.

LUCY
Yeah. Try this one. You going to stay the night.

CHANEY
Not this time.

She grinds a pot across a burner.

(CONTINUED)
137 CONTINUED:

CHANÉY
Get it out. What's bothering you.

LUCY
All right. Hell yes, something's wrong. A lot of things. The rent. Price of groceries. Clothes I can't buy. A few items like that.

CHANÉY
How much do you want.

LUCY
I don't want your money. I want my money. And I don't want to wait on tables to get it.

CHANÉY
You'll catch on somewhere.

LUCY
Do you ever read a newspaper. Things are tough... Besides, I want something with some life in it.

Chaney rises.

LUCY
The way things are now nothing connects. Like you. You don't connect to any other part of the way I live. Nothing does. Everything's in separate closets.

CHANÉY
Things are better that way. Keeps them simple. Fewer edges showing.

LUCY
That's only good if you're on top of things. As soon as I get on the street with everybody else I get moved around. I don't like that.

Chaney removes some money from his wallet.

(CONTINUED)
137 CONTINUED: (2)

CHANNEY

Take some.

She shakes her head.

LUCY
I told you. I want my own. I don't want to depend on you. You're not reliable. You come when you want, go when you want and never mention what comes in the middle.

Chaney crumples the money in his hand.

CHANNEY

Suit yourself.

Puts on his cap and leaves.

CUT.

138 POOLROOM

Chaney drinking.

He watches two sleazos rack and shoot.

VOICE
I'll buy you one.

Gandil sits down. Jim Henry and Street stand a pace away.

GANDIL

How you been.

Wait.

GANDIL

You want to talk about the sporting life.

CHANNEY

I'm out of it.

GANDIL

That's too bad. Since I had to give up on you, I went out and bought another hitter. The best.

(CONTINUED)
CONTINUED:

CHANÉY
Must make you happy. Now you got what you want.

GANDIL
I'll tell you what I want... You must have saved quite a stash by now. How about five thousand. Him against you.

CHANÉY
I don't need any more money.

GANDIL
There's no point in avoiding this thing. It's going to happen.

STREET
He's right.

Chaney looks up at Street.

CHANÉY
You want it that much.

STREET
I'm getting paid.

Wait.

STREET
I can always reach over and start things right now.

CHANÉY
Yeah, but you won't.

Wait.

CHANÉY
You're not going to do it for free.

Chaney drinks up.

Leaves.

CUT.
A touring car is parked in the foreground.

Speed pulls his Packard into his usual parking space.

As he gets out of the car and starts for the house, two men grab him and force him across the street to the touring car.

He tries to resist.

SPEED
Hey, what the hell is this...
Who the hell are you... Hey...

They push him into the back seat.

The car pulls off.

CUT.

BAR

After hours.

The four toughs bring in Speed.

LeBeau standing at the rail.

Looks at Speed.

Wait.

LeBEAU
This is your lucky night.

SPEED
That depends on how you look at it.

LeBEAU
I'll tell you how to look at it. Right about now I'd be deciding whether to break your back or your legs. But somebody paid the interest on your debt.

LeBeau looks over at a booth.

Gandil and Jim Henry are seated.

(CONTINUED)
CONTINUED:

Street is sitting beside them.

Gandil smiles at Speed.

GANDIL
Just for one week. Your man fights Mr. Street and I'll handle your whole mortgage.

SPEED
My man... Chick, he won't even speak to me.

GANDIL
Yeah, I know but we're going to put you on ice and maybe he'll speak to me.

CUT.

141 STEAMED MIRROR

A hand wipes a portion of the glass.

Chaney's face appears.

142 CHANEY'S ROOM

He has nearly finished shaving.

143 OPEN DOORWAY

Poe raps on the door, then enters the room.

Chaney looks at him.

Then turns back to the mirror.

POE
I don't want to interrupt anything.

Wait.

POE
Gandil came to see me. We've got a problem.

(CONTINUED)
143 CONTINUED:

CHANZ
You and me don't have any trouble.

POE
I'm afraid we do. It's about our old friend Speed.

CHANZ
He send you.

POE
Doesn't even know I'm here.

CHANZ
Speed and I aren't related anymore.

Chaney finishes with the razor.

POE
Things don't work that easy. He's in a lot of trouble.

CHANZ
Not interested.

Begins to wash up.

POE
Speed owes a ton to one of our local riffraff. They're putting the arm on him. Gandil's going to pay the loan off if you take on his man. No crowd. Just business.

CHANZ
They want me to bet five thousand dollars... That's all the money I got.

Reaches for a towel.

CHANZ
And I don't owe that Goddamn Speed nothing.

POE
That's not the point. It's real simple. He's in the ringer. You're the only one that can get him out.

(CONTINUED)
143 CONTINUED: (2)

Wait.

CHANET
Money's hard to come by.

CUT.

144 HIGH WALLED ROOM
DAY

Sparsely furnished.

Speed, Jim Henry and two toughs playing draw poker.

SPEED
Has anybody got a cigarette.

TOUGH #2
I don't use 'em.

SPEED
I'd be happy to go down and get some.

TOUGH #1
You're not going anywhere.

JIM HENRY
Things don't work out tomorrow night, which one of you gets to do the job.

TOUGH #2
Both of us.

JIM HENRY
Uhh ah. I'll take him.

Speed is not threatened.

SPEED
Yeah, that's right. It's been a while since you won one... Chaney really cleaned your plow, didn't he.

Jim Henry looks at Speed.

SPEED
How'd it feel.

(CONTINUED)
CONTINUED:

JIM HENRY
Shut up and play cards.

Speed throws his cards in the air. They shower onto the floor.

Speed gets up from his chair, walks to the back of the room.

Looks out the window.

CUT.

LUCY
wearing a slip.
Walking through her place.
Opens the door.
Chaney.

LUCY
I've got a visitor.

CHANNEY
Some other time.

Turns to go.

LUCY
No wait. I'll walk you down.

She grabs her coat off the hook, pulls it on, goes out the door.

ON THE STREET
Chaney and Lucy.

CHANNEY
How you been.

LUCY
How do I look.

(CONTINUED)
CONTINUED:

CHANey

No complaints.

Wait.

Lucy

There's something I want to tell you.

Wait.

Lucy

I don't think you should drop by anymore.

Wait.

Lucy

Things have changed.

Wait.

Lucy

I think I'm moving. Going to get a better place.

Wait.

Lucy

I got a better offer. Somebody that spends the night... He's even got a steady job.

Wait.

Chaney

You got things all figured out.

Lucy

That's all you got to say.

Chaney looks at her.

Walks away.

CUT.

OPEN DOOR - GANDIL'S WAREHOUSE

Forming an archway.

(continued)
CONTINUED:

Empty.

Rain falling in the street beyond.

GUSTS of WIND.

WAREHOUSE - GARAGE

Rows of oyster tubs and shells.

The area between forms an open square.

OUTSIDE THE WAREHOUSE

Speed's Packard arrives.

Parks near the open door; Poe gets out, walks into the building.

POE

walking to the center.

Very quiet.

He looks around.

No Chaney.

LeBEAU AND DOTY

standing near the back stairway. LeBeau moves to Poe.

POE

Gentlemen...

LeBEAU

Good evening... How long is this going to take?

POE

We'll have to wait to find out.

Poe turns and looks toward the entrance.

LeBeau rejoins Doty.

They stand motionless.
152  POE
    waiting.

153  THE BLADE FAN
    turning slowly.

154  CHANEY'S ROOM  NIGHT
    Chaney, fully dressed, lies across the small bed.
    Eyes closed -- they snap open, stare at the ceiling.
    Rises from the bed.
    The cat is nearby.
    Chaney goes to the window.
    Looks out.
    Moves to the door.
    Takes his coat and cap off the hook, puts them on.
    Face totally deadpan.
    Looks at cat.
    Picks up his duffel bag.
    Turns off the lights and goes out the door.

155  ARCHWAY
    Empty.

156  POE
    standing, waiting.
157 LeBEAU, DOTY
watching Poe.

158 POE
Silence.
Expectation.

159 THE ARCHWAY
Chaney.
Standing motionless.
Rain falling behind him.

160 THE OPEN AREA
Chaney walks to the center.
Looks straight ahead.
SOUND of his FOOTSTEPS.
Poe moves to his side.
Long exchange of looks.

CHANNEY
Let's get started.

POE
Why not.

Poe turns to LeBeau.

POE
Where are they.

LeBEAU
Upstairs.

Looks at Doty.

LeBEAU
Go up and get them.

(CONTINUED)
CONTINUED:

POE

I'll do it.
Poe starts for the back stairway.
Looks up.
Glass windows of the office gleam above him.
He picks up a crescent wrench.
Poe throws it through the glass.
Wait.
No response.

DOORWAY

at the top of the stairs.
Jim Henry comes out.
Steamed.
Looks below.

POE

We're not going to wait here all night.

Jim Henry stares at Poe for a moment.
Sees Chaney.
Goes back inside.

CHANNEY

leaning against a truck.
Still wet from the rain.

THE DOORWAY ABOVE

as it opens...

(CONTINUED)
163 CONTINUED:
Speed, Gandil, Jim Henry, Street and two Toughs.
They start down the concrete stairs.
Gandil hands LeBeau an envelope as he passes by.

164 ON THE FLOOR
Speed looks around.
Newly found freedom.
He walks over to Chaney and Poe.

SPEED
Thanks, pal.

Chaney nods.

SPEED
Just like old times.

POE
We did add a couple of new wrinkles.

Speed looks at Street.

CHANNEY
You ever seen him fight.

SPEED
Never had the pleasure. I just know they didn't bring him all the way from Chicago to lose.

CHANNE
Let's do it.

Speed pivots, he's got the old flash back in his eyes.

SPEED
All right you big shot piss-ants, we're ready over here.

The two groups are at a standoff.

(CONTINUED)
CONTINUED:

GANDIL
Anybody else got something to say?

Street looks directly at Chaney.

STREET
Glad you could make it.

CHANNEY
Things have a way of coming around.

Gandil flashes a roll.

GANDIL
You know, I envy you, Mr. Chaney. It must be exciting to bet more money than you can afford to lose.

CHANNEY
Who's going to hold it.

Speed looks over at Gandil.

SPEED
He is.

Chaney hands Speed the scratch.

Speed takes the pot-bet over to Gandil.

Hands him the money.

SPEED
Chick... no matter what you do, you're always going to end up smelling like fish.

Speed turns away.

GANDIL
Close it up.

THE WAREHOUSE DOOR
ROARS downward.

(CONTINUED)
CONTINUED:
Slams shut.
Sealing off the building.

BETWEEN THE OYSTER BINS
All nervous, except for the hitters.

CHANNEY, SPEED AND POE
standing close.
Chaney turns his back.
Takes off his cap and coat.
Hands them to Speed.
Turns again.
Faces Street.
The others move to the side.

STREET
as big as ever.
Hands like coal-hammers.

THE TWO
Palms up.
Ten feet between them.
They stand motionless.
Perfect calm.
Hands at sides.
Neither taking an offensive stance.
Eyes holding on eyes.
CONTINUED:
Chaney begins walking straight to his opponent.
Hands still at his sides.
He almost moves casually.
Almost.
Suddenly the two men become joined.
Fists raking one another.
Punch for punch.
Blow for blow.
Movement of arms with the speed of a lash.

BOTH MEN
cease.
Again stand motionless.
Look at one another.
Absolute quiet.

SPEED
whispers Jesus.

POE
Eyes shining.

LeBEAU AND DOTY
Apprehensive.

CHANNEY AND STREET
join again.

(CONTINUED)
CONTINUED:

Raining blows.
Trip-hammer concussion.
Street grabs Chaney's left.
Slowly pulls him close.
Smashing with his own right.
Chaney blocking punches.
Still caught in the grip.
Suddenly all blows cease.
They test each other's strength.
The moment of decision.
Chaney twists free.
Again they stand facing one another.
Street moves with his right.
Chaney steps around it.
Left to the head.
Chaney now the artist.
Slides, hits, slides again.
Chaney's blows are coming fast, in combinations.
A flurry.
Street falls back.
Not a result of one blow.
All of them.
He continues to stagger backwards.
Moving on his heels.
Further backward.

(CONTINUED)
Chaney watching.

Gandil nudges Jim Henry.

Jim Henry throws two palmers out to Street.

They clatter on the cement floor.

Street looks down at the shining pieces of metal.

Gandil takes a step toward his hitter.

    GANDIL
    Use them. Use them.

Speed jumps in.

    SPEED
    Foul. Get those palmers out of here.

    GANDIL
    Use them, Goddammit. Use them.
    Use them.

    SPEED
    Forfeit. Money's forfeited.
    What the hell do you think this is.

Street looks at Gandil.

Kicks the palmers away.

Moves back toward the center.

CENTER AREA

Chaney goes to finish his man.

Street gets off. Misses.

Chaney doesn't.

Head, body, body, head.

Hook, cross, hook again. Straight right.

(CONTINUED)
Continued:

A finisher.
Street falls.
Tries to rise.
On his feet, moves forward.
Falls again.
Sprawled against a truck wheel.
His eyes are vacant.
Chaney goes to him.
Looks down then turns away.
Walks to Speed.
Puts on his coat and hat.
Nobody else moves.
Chaney crosses to Gandil.

Chaney
You owe me money.

Gandil hands him the roll.
Poe and Speed come up next to Chaney.

Gandil
You know you cost me a great deal, Mr. Chaney.

Chaney
You'll live with it.

Gandil
It's been a pleasure watching you work.

Speed
Well, Chick, like the man says... the next best thing to playin' and winnin' is playin' and losin'.

(Continued)
CONTINUED: (2)

GANDIL

I'll see you.

The trio start for the big door.

CHANEY, POE AND SPEED

by the big door.

It quietly rises.

They walk out into the rain.

CUT.

RIVERFRONT AREA

Near the ferry.

Speed's car drives up.

A long row of boxcars.

THE PACKARD

as it comes to a halt.

Speed and Poe in front, they get out.

Chaney steps out of the back seat.

SPEED

You sure this as far as you want to go.

CHANNEY

Yeah. I'm sure.

Chaney reaches into his bag, pulls out a handful of money.

He walks over to Poe.

CHANKEY

I got a cat back there at my place. I'd like you to take care of it for me.

(Continued)
CONTINUED:

Gives Poe some greenbacks.

POE
That's a lot of money.

Chaney looks over at Speed.

CHANNEY
You take care of Poe.

Gives Speed money.

SPEED
For a man that came to town to make money, you're giving a lot of it away.

CHANNEY
You're forgetting about the in-betweens.

SPEED
You sure filled those up.

Chaney puts a handful of cash back in his own pocket.

SPEED
Where you heading.

CHANNEY
North.

Chaney starts away.

SPEED
Chaney.

Chaney turns and looks.

SPEED
We ought to say something.

Chaney smiles.
Walks into the darkness.

 Doesn't look back.

(CONTINUED)
CONTINUED:  (2)

Speed and Poe.

Get back inside the Packard.

SPEED
Maybe we ought to head on down to Miami. Get some action going down there. Hell of a town you know. Right on the ocean. That salt sea air is good for your health.

POE
Uh huh.

SPEED
He sure was something.

POE
Let's go get the cat.

SPEED
Yeah.

They drive off in the opposite direction and into the Black.

THE END