

63 CONTINUED: (5)

63

FORTUNE TELLER (cont'd)

Every commitment, every truth, every ideal, everything of beauty, all these things are being stripped away. You are living in a world where all the jewels, diamonds, pearls, and rubies have been replaced by queer replicas. I see a lot of anger here, and you scoff at things you don't understand.

Tom scoffs, looks at Pagan. She is immersed in prayer.

FORTUNE TELLER

And you, young lady. Lemme see that hand.

At first, Pagan doesn't respond. Then, she snaps out of her reverie.

PAGAN LACE

Yeah, me? What about me?

The fortune teller takes Pagan's hand. Pagan gasps. Her beads break and go flying everywhere.

FORTUNE TELLER

You have feelings you don't understand, that's because in one of your past lives, you were the daughter of a pope. You were hidden from the world. That's why in this life you feel like you've been trampled over. And it's true. You are being trampled over. Don't you feel like you're being trampled over?

(pointing to a line on her palm)

See this here? Someone you trust could get you in trouble this week...

The fortune teller lets go of Pagan Lace, who tries to retrieve the scattered beads. The fortune teller then turns to Tom Friend.

FORTUNE TELLER (cont'd)

You son, you're about to enter a new and serious realm... The world of the unknown.

TOM FRIEND

Go on.

(CONTINUED)

63 CONTINUED: (6)

63

FORTUNE TELLER

Your place of existence is temporal.
I see that you write things down.
This is a good sign.

TOM FRIEND

(sotto)

I'm the voice of the people. Ha-ha.

FORTUNE TELLER

There are a few things you should be
concerned about. Things could take an
upward turn, but you will first have
to give up your high-tech lifestyle.

TOM FRIEND

(hands her money)

Yeah, my high-tech lifestyle. Okay,
here. I've heard enough. Is there
anymore?

FORTUNE TELLER

I see by this line here that you're
still looking for something that
you've already found. A temptation
tugs at your roots, but it's a trap.
See this line here? Someone is
praying that you'll escape this
trap...

She looks into Tom's eyes and speaks with greater
emphasis.

FORTUNE TELLER (cont'd)

Victory comes from avoiding it
altogether or running swiftly from it.

Tom is struck by this ominous line.

PAGAN

(as she finishes gathering
her beads)

Tom, that's enough. Let's go.

FORTUNE TELLER

Beware of the majority. You must be
skeptical of the majority, the brave
and the good were never in the
majority. I see by this line that you
are a strong-willed individual.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

63 CONTINUED: (7)

63

FORTUNE TELLER (cont'd)
 Literature is your voice. And
 literature my friend is the voice that
 outlives the body. Yes, you are the
 voice of the people. You have an
 inquisitive mind, a mind that demands
 justice. I see by this line here that
 you're at a crossroads. You're a
 writer who writes the same sentence
 over and over again.

He pulls his hand away.

TOM FRIEND
 Let's get the hell out of here.

Tom storms away. Before Pagan can exit, the fortune
 teller grabs her hand. The fortune teller's mouth doesn't
 move, but Pagan hears the following.

FORTUNE TELLER (V.O.)
 I see a dark haired individual who
 looms large in your future... Beware
 of Val Xavier and his snakeskin
 jacket.

Pagan pulls her hand away and exits. Someone else comes
 along and sits down with the fortune teller. We hear the
 storm outside.

CUT TO:

64 INT. SOUNDSTAGE - CONTINUOUS

64

We angle on Nina in her cubicle. She sits at her desk,
 feet up. She's on the phone, listening to the radio at
 the same time.

NINA
 Thank you, I'll pass that advice along
 to him.

She slams down the phone. In a distressed state, she
 listens to the following.

RADIO ANNOUNCER (V.O.)
 Geologists in Trenton are digging the
 world's deepest hole and have reached
 a depth of thirty miles. Something
 went amiss when the drill bit began to
 rotate wildly out of control.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

64 CONTINUED:

64

RADIO ANNOUNCER (cont'd)

Geologists measured the temperature down there as up to 3,000 degrees. They have lowered microphones into the pit and heard the sounds of millions of suffering souls. Dr. Samosa, at the project management center, has determined that the center of the earth is hollow. "Hopefully," he says, "whatever is down there will stay down there." Work has ground to a halt. And many of the scientists have feared for their lives. In the west, rain is expected, and heavy snowfall is moving in from the plains....

Nina picks up the phone and dials, but gets only a busy signal. We hear the storm.

CUT TO:

65 INT. SOUNDSTAGE - CONTINUOUS

65

We follow Jack Fate and Bobby Cupid past the holy janitor, who is sweeping. He spots Jack Fate and approaches them. The janitor hands Jack a flyer that reads: Do you believe in aliens? Crop circles? Graffiti in the wheat fields? Are you concerned with lasers and fiber optics in the UFO tapestry? If you are ready to break with the traditional political process, and are concerned with the future of freedom and liberty come to this address.

66 INT. SOUNDSTAGE - CONTINUOUS

66

Jack pockets the flyer and steps on stage, joining the waiting musicians. He launches into "Tryin' To Get To Heaven" on his guitar.

Lyrics

The air is getting hotter

There's a rumbling in the skies

I've been wading through the high muddy water

With the heat rising in my eyes

Every day your memory grows dimmer

(CONTINUED)

66 CONTINUED:

66

It doesn't haunt me like it did before
I've been walking through the middle of nowhere
Trying to get to heaven before they close the door
When I was in Missouri
They would not let me be
I had to leave there in a hurry
I only saw what they let me see
You broke a heart that loved you
Now you can seal up the book and not write anymore
I've been walking that lonesome valley
Trying to get to heaven before they close the door
People on the platforms
Waiting for the trains
I can hear their hearts a-beatin'
Like pendulums swinging on chains
When you think that you lost everything
You find out you can always lose a little more
I'm just going down the road feeling bad
Trying to get to heaven before they close the door
I'm going down the river
Down to New Orleans
They tell me everything is gonna be all right
But I don't know what "all right" means
I was riding in a buggy with Miss Mary-Jane
Miss Mary-Jane got a house in Baltimore

(CONTINUED)

66 CONTINUED: (2)

66

I been all around the world, boys

Now I'm trying to get to heaven before they close the door

Gonna sleep down in the parlor

And relive my dreams

I'll close my eyes and I wonder

If everything is as hollow as it seems

Some trains don't pull no gamblers

No midnight ramblers, like they did before

I been to Sugar Town, I shook the sugar down

Now I'm trying to get to heaven before they close the door

CUT TO:

67 INT. DRESSING ROOM - DAY

67

Bobby Cupid sits with Uncle Sweetheart. Bobby Cupid tries to play the chords on the guitar, while Uncle Sweetheart continues reviewing the voluminous sheaf of papers from his bursting briefcase.

BOBBY CUPID

Man, I didn't think he played that song anymore. Those chords are so unorthodox. That E diminished to F Sharp Minor. The way it descends. It doesn't even make musical sense, but by the way he positions that harmony line and changes the beat within the structure, it's like a concerto. And that doesn't even take into account the use of the words. The counterpart is always switching places with the melody line, especially when the beat switches from three to two to go with the lyric. I don't know how the hell he does that, concentrate on two things at the same time.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

67 CONTINUED:

67

BOBBY CUPID (cont'd)

Old Jack, he was always a hundred years ahead of his time.

UNCLE SWEETHEART

I don't know what you're talking about. If a song works it works. Alexander the Great was a hundred years ahead of his time, toc.

BOBBY CUPID

Who?

UNCLE SWEETHEART

Alexander the Great. The cat who conquered all of Persia, Africa and Egypt. A lot of people don't know about him, but he was a great singer, too. His mother -- and he had a hell of a mother -- says to him, "Is that all you're gonna do with your life? Just sing songs to the girls? You could be out there doing a lot more, son. You could be conquering this god forsaken world." You know what he got up and did?

BOBBY CUPID

(goofing on Uncle Sweetheart)

Who?

UNCLE SWEETHEART (cont'd)

(exasperated)

Alexander the Great. That's who I'm talking about. He went out and raised an army, cooked all his enemies in crank case oil, rounded up all the wise citizens and doused them in canned heat, wiped his mouth, looked around, went home, went to bed, and died. Left every nation he plundered and conquered for his armies to divide. Sure, he could've stayed home and strummed on his guitar, but you never would have heard of him. He never would have been Alexander the Great.

BOBBY CUPID

Well, I don't know. But I don't think he had songs like these...

(CONTINUED)

67 CONTINUED: (2)

67

UNCLE SWEETHEART

Yeah, but what I'm saying is that you don't change the world just by singing.

BOBBY CUPID

Okay, I'll keep it in mind.

UNCLE SWEETHEART

You got any idea what that song's about?

BOBBY CUPID

Yeah, it's about trying to get to heaven. You got to know the route before you start out.

UNCLE SWEETHEART

No, it's not about that at all. What strikes you about the song is the Jekyll and Hyde quality. That's what you like. It's written from Hyde's point of view. It's just like you. That's why it rings so true. Because the whole thing is about doing evil and killing your conscience if you can. It's not like those other songs of his. Those other ones about faithless women, booze, brothels, and the cruelty of society. This one's not like those. This one's right up your alley. It's about doing good by trying to manipulate the forces of evil. Isn't that why you like it? Isn't that what you trying to do? Admit it. That's what draws you to the song. Robert Louis Stevenson, it's everything he was saying and more. It's all in that song. That's why you like it. Admit it.

BOBBY CUPID

Yeah, okay. If you say so.

They return to their activities.

CUT TO:

68 INT. DRESSING ROOM - DAY

68

Jack Fate washes his hands, looks at himself in the mirror. Tom Friend enters the bathroom.

TOM FRIEND

What have I been doing? Pissing and missing the bowl?

Jack faces him.

TOM FRIEND (cont'd)

You're avoiding me, but you don't need to avoid me. I owe you an apology. I just want to know a few things. Who's getting the money from this concert? Who's pockets is it lining? How much are they paying you to trot around the ring? I wanna know what pipe of power you're smoking from. Remember Janis Joplin, Jack, the Judy Garland of rock and roll? She took it all the way, didn't she? Lord, all she wanted was a Mercedes Benz. I know you knew her, Jack. You like people who fall on their knees and fawn all over you. I don't do that, that's why you don't like me, isn't it? That's why you don't want to answer any questions.

JACK FATE

I never really thought about that.

TOM FRIEND

Exactly. What about your rejected thoughts? Give me a few pieces of the puzzle. Tell me about the king of the sexual revolutionaries. Hefner, that son of the Bible-thumping Baptist. You know who I'm talking about. How does he figure into this? What about that guy, Jack? The guy's slept with 3,000 women. What the fuck for? He's only got three or four kids. He should have a thousand kids. He should be king of the world. What's the point, Jack? What was he sleeping with all those women for? What went wrong. Tell me. You're supposed to have all the answers.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

68 CONTINUED:

68

TOM FRIEND (cont'd)

Sexuality is more revolutionary than any ideology, and you know it. You think good and bad are irrelevant? Tell me why. I wanna know what the hell makes you tick... And where are you going from here?

JACK FATE

If I knew I'd be glad to tell you.

TOM FRIEND

That's a pat answer. Here's an easy one. Who's your true companion, Jack? Who makes your life easier? Can you at least answer that?

Jack turns to leave.

TOM FRIEND (cont'd)

Look, man, I'm on your side. I wanna put your story on the front page of the London Times. You need the publicity and you know it. You know the London Times, Jack? You been in England lately? It ain't so English anymore. You wouldn't recognize the place. Big Ben is still there, so's the Tower of London, but it's just a theme park. The English are in the minority in their own country, Jack. Imagine that. They didn't keep their birth rate up. Just a lot of the elderly. What Hitler and Napoleon couldn't do has been done in a bloodless coup. Churchill wouldn't know the place, his beloved country. You got your start there, Jack. How does that make you feel? The empire is finished. What do you think about all that? That's what I want to know... Look, man. I'm on your side.

JACK FATE

Don't worry about it.

TOM FRIEND

I don't want to be here anymore than you do.

JACK FATE

I doubt it.

(CONTINUED)

68 CONTINUED: (2)

68

Jack Fate exits, leaving Tom Friend alone.

CUT TO:

69 INT. LONG, LABYRINTHINE CORRIDOR

69

Jack Fate steps out of the bathroom door and into a dark, shadowy, labyrinth. He tries to find his way back to the stage. As he does, he passes the following things:

A. A BLIND MAN; looks like Father Time or Plato.

BLIND MAN

You don't know me, but I've heard of you. We have a lot in common. Pity me. I murdered my father in a scuffle, stabbed him in the neck. I married my mother in a lavish ceremony attended by hundreds. I put out my own eyes. I was forewarned that I would do this, and by golly, I did. All of the pieces of my life are not in good shape, but some things are in perfect order. It disgusted me when I had my fortune read and I was forewarned of what I was about to do. It was the last thing I ever thought would happen. I ran as far as I could to get away. I even ran to another country and I thought I was safe. I never thought it would happen to me, killing my father and marrying my mother. I wanted to turn and run and disappear. But to hear Dr. Freud tell it, I had it all planned out from the beginning. I'd strangle him if I could. He slandered me. He never met me. He made it all up. Dr. Freud, he wrote about me from cocaine hell. Cocaine, that's the only thing he knew anything about. His patients paid him in it. Cocoa leaf, the curse of the Incas, gift of the gods, the divine leaf of immortality. He knew it well. Thought it gave him more vitality and an increase in self control. He sang its praises. Psychotherapy, that great science, with no fixed laws. An entire industry based on cocaine fantasies and hallucinations.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

69 CONTINUED:

69

BLIND MAN (cont'd)

Think about it. He started it all. German agents dealt it to the British troops who went crazy on it. 90% of all dollar bills show traces of it. Monkeys pass up food and sex for it. It's the amazing elixir of life. Dr. Freud, he got it from his dentist, his dealer, gave it to him as an anaesthetic. Dr. Freud thought most of our diseases are caused by brain exhaustion. Long before it was fashionable, he was snorting it around the clock. He rewrote my life's history and turned it into a nightmare of childish, sexual fantasy from everyday life. I've become a symbol of sexual perversion. Yes, indeed, pity me. They don't call it the Freudian sniff for nothing. Dr. Freud, he had nasal sores and bleeding, died a slow painful death. He should've been writing about his own life, left mine alone. Say what you want about me, I didn't need any mood elevators to get to the top floor. But I understand his struggle. The ride of life is never smooth. Life is putting up a lot of iron. You take it down and you haul it over the road and you set it up again. It's grueling and it takes a little something to make it easier. I just wish he would've written about somebody else. Now, if you'll excuse me, I need to get back to my guests.

He walks off into the darkness, and we hear a horrific crash.

B. A MAN on the run. He stops in front of Jack Fate. They seem to recognize each other.

MAN ON THE RUN

They're filming a TV show back there. You watch TV for any considerable length of time, you think that everybody's either rich or that he's about to die a horrible death.

The man takes off again.

(CONTINUED)

69 CONTINUED: (2)

69

C. He walks past a doorway with a sign on it. The sign shows a giant chicken chasing a small man. It reads: "man-eating chicken." He opens the door to reveal an average man sitting at a table eating from a bucket of fried chicken. He seems surprised by the intrusion. Jack closes the door and moves on.

D. The magician approaches Jack Fate and performs a trick for him (e.g. - He pulls a flower from inside his jacket.)

E. Jack Fate finally winds up in a darkened, empty soundstage, except for a solitary man, dressed in old-fashioned clothes and carrying a banjo. His face has been disfigured, but otherwise he looks like a dandy gone to seed. Is he real or ethereal? His name is OSCAR VOGEL.

JACK FATE

Excuse me, I got myself all turned around. Where's the stage?

OSCAR VOGEL

No. You're in the right place.

JACK FATE

You look familiar. Do I know you?

OSCAR VOGEL

Yes, you do. My name is Oscar Vogel.

JACK FATE

Oscar Vogel.

OSCAR VOGEL

Do you remember? It was many years ago. I was the star of the show here. One of the biggest stars. Your father would bring you when you were a child. I'd put you on the show. You'd play your guitar. Sing a song. When I heard you were doing a show here, I thought you might return the favor. Beggar that I am, I am even poor in thanks.

JACK FATE

I don't know if there's room for anybody on the show. You should talk to this guy named Uncle Sweetheart.

(CONTINUED)

69 CONTINUED: (3)

69

OSCAR VOGEL

Yes, I remember him, too. He put shows on in the past here. I was one of your father's favorite performers once. Everything was going great as long as you kept your mouth shut. But your father was doing things that were wrong. His desire for retaliation and revenge was too strong, which caused a lot of injustice, lies and bad things. I was the only one in any position to say anything. Everyone else was too scared. I had the show. I had a forum. So, I spoke out. It's not what goes in the mouth, it's what comes out that counts. They said it was an accident. Some even said it was a suicide. Some people choose to die in all kinds of ways. Some jump out of buildings and slit their wrists on the way down. Some fall on their own sword. I opened my mouth... That's the way it goes.

JACK FATE

How do I get to the stage?

OSCAR VOGEL

The stage. Ah, yes, the stage. The whole world's a stage.

Jack Fate walks past Oscar Vogel into the darkness. We hear the sounds of the storm.

DISSOLVE TO:

70 INT. PRESIDENTIAL MANSION -DAY

70

Outside the President's "bedroom," his staff from high ranking loyalists to household help stand vigil, awaiting the inevitable end. From inside the bedroom, we hear weeping. Then, the curtain is parted. We see the President, covered with his sheets. Edmund emerges from the room. Some, amongst the gathered, burst into tears.

EDMUND

The President is dead.

Some mutter "long live the President" in response.

(CONTINUED)

70 CONTINUED:

70

EDMUND (cont'd)

Thank you. The President was a strong and brave man who's principles and beliefs never wavered, and which we must continue to strictly adhere to and carry out, in accordance with his last wishes. As you know, we have captured the cultural institutions of this country. The institutions that shape the souls of the young. The schools, the colleges, the movies, music, and the arts. They all belong to us now. At the moment, we are giving people a new identity, and erasing the collective memory. We are rewriting the history books. Nothing was more important to our President than bringing peace to this war torn country. Peace, a lasting peace, can only be achieved through strength. So, in my first act as the new President, as the leader of the new government, this new regime, we will begin to deploy troops immediately to the southern regions, we will resume the bombing in the jungle. We will begin executing and enslaving prisoners, and that includes those who have preached diversity but who have never practiced it, and those who decried intolerance but were the least tolerant of all. We shall deal with them in a harsh manner. Remember this, life is a chess game, where all the pieces are the same color. Your self-discipline shall be watched and judged. Furthermore, we will alert the rebel leaders that the negotiations have ended. There will be no more compromises. No more concessions. Only complete and utter and unequivocal surrender. We have learned a valuable lesson. Great nations do not fight small wars. We have seen the difference between winners and losers. Those who are victorious, win first then go to war, while the defeated go to war first and then seek to win.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

70 CONTINUED: (2)

70

EDMUND (cont'd)

There will be no more stupidity. No more mistakes. It is a new day. God help you all.

He begins to march down the hall, attended to by his new staff while his security force begins clearing the room of mourners. We hear the storm raging.

CUT TO:

NEWS FOOTAGE: Same as the opening montage. Political unrest and violence, natural disasters, etc. Change is occurring whether we want it or not.

71 EXT. STREET

71

We see the homeless man in the rain, leaning up against the wall with his broken boom box. We hear the sound of Edmund's speech emanating from it.

CUT TO:

72 INT. SOUNDSTAGE

72

MONTAGE (MOS) To the opening strains of "Cold Irons Bound"

1. Director and technicians in the booth, ready for broadcast, but the monitors show nothing but static and they can't fix it.

2. Nina Veronica enters urgently, sees the broadcast transmission difficulties and gets on the phone to Lucius and his flunkies. There is no answer.

3. Uncle Sweetheart, alone in the dressing room, drinking heavily.

3a. Tom Friend and Pagan Lace outside the SOUNDSTAGE, immersed in a horrible, physical argument in the rain.

4. Bobby Cupid asleep in a remote, dark corner of the SOUNDSTAGE. He hears the opening riff of the song, awakens, and steps onto the stage where all the workers and others dance and gyrate and genuflect to this Swamp Boogie Tent revival show.

CUT TO:

73 INT. SOUNDSTAGE

73

Jack and the band playing "Cold Irons Bound."

Lyrics

I'm beginning to hear voices and there's no one around
 Well, I'm all used up and the fields have turned brown
 I went to church on Sunday and she passed by
 My love for her is taking such a long time to die
 I'm waist deep, waist deep in the mist
 It's almost like, almost like I don't exist
 I'm twenty miles out of town, in cold irons bound
 The walls of pride are high and wide
 Can't see over to the other side
 It's such a sad thing to see beauty decay
 It's sadder still, to feel your heart torn away
 One look at you and I'm out of control
 Like the universe has swallowed me whole
 I'm twenty miles out of town in cold irons bound
 There's too many people, too many to recall
 I thought some of 'm were friends of mine; I was wrong
 about 'm all
 Well, the road is rocky and the hillside's mud
 Up over my head nothing but clouds of blood
 I found my world, found my world in you
 But your love just hasn't proved true
 I'm twenty miles out of town in cold irons bound
 Twenty miles out of town in cold irons bound

(CONTINUED)

73 CONTINUED:

73

Oh, the winds in Chicago have torn me to shreds
 Reality has always had too many heads
 Some things last longer that you think they will
 There are some kind of things you can never kill
 It's you and you only, I'm been thinking about
 But you can't see in and it's hard lookin' out
 I'm twenty miles out of town in cold irons bound
 Well the fats in the fire and the water's in the tank
 The whiskey's in the jar and the money's in the bank
 I tried to love and protect you because I cared
 I'm gonna remember forever the joy that we shared
 Looking at you and I'm on my bended knee
 You have no idea what you do to me
 I'm twenty miles out of town in cold irons bound
 Twenty miles out of town in cold irons bound
 As Jack repeats the last line again and again, we

CUT TO:

74 INT. SOUNDSTAGE - DAY

74

As the army bursts in, breaking up the show, taking prisoners, harassing and injuring innocent people. A small group of soldiers burst into the booth and take a struggling Nina Veronica into custody. The plug is pulled. In the midst of the madness:

VENTRILOQUIST'S DUMMY

That song makes so much psychological sense. It doesn't pander or talk down to anyone. And it's got a great melody.

(CONTINUED)

74 CONTINUED:

74

VENTRILOQUIST
I'm sorry, what?

FADE OUT.

75 INT. SOUNDSTAGE - LATER - DAY

75

As people pick through the rubble trying to make sense of the senseless violence, an inebriated Uncle Sweetheart is hitting on Pagan Lace, who is picking up shards and relics like collecting shells on the beach. She is not listening to Uncle Sweetheart.

UNCLE SWEETHEART
We're living in a tawdry and vulgar age. What do you think?

PAGAN LACE
(distracted by her task)
Yes, we are.

UNCLE SWEETHEART
You know when the Roman empire fell?
You know what Caesar and the rest of them Romans were doing when the barbarians were at the gates?

PAGAN LACE
What?

UNCLE SWEETHEART
Shooting craps and gambling.

PAGAN LACE
Gambling's a waste of time and energy.

UNCLE SWEETHEART
If you wanna build a casino, you gotta build it like a fortress in case there's a police raid.

PAGAN LACE
I suppose.

UNCLE SWEETHEART (cont'd)
Can I offer you a drink? Wanna be sociable?

PAGAN LACE
I don't drink.

(CONTINUED)

75 CONTINUED:

75

UNCLE SWEETHEART (cont'd)
One little sip of nectar.

PAGAN LACE
I said I don't drink.

UNCLE SWEETHEART
Come on, you're not on duty.

PAGAN LACE
I told you before, no.

UNCLE SWEETHEART
Come on, you can get to the truth of things. Discover the riches of a wise and good life.

PAGAN LACE
Thanks, I'll stay as I am.

UNCLE SWEETHEART (cont'd)
Don't you want to live forever? Put some liquor in your blood.

Uncle Sweetheart tries to force the drink on her. She resists mightily. A minor struggle ensues. Tom Friend enters. He is clearly medicated.

TOM FRIEND
She don't want a drink.

Uncle Sweetheart and Pagan Lace uncouple.

UNCLE SWEETHEART
Oh, look who's here. The sultan of sleaze. The thing that came from outer space. Where'd you come from, the world's fair? We're having a conversation here.

TOM FRIEND
You've had your day and there's no more conversation.

PAGAN LACE
It's okay.

(CONTINUED)

75 CONTINUED: (2)

75

UNCLE SWEETHEART

Look, I was selling porn magazines out of the trunk of my car before you were born. Don't tell me I've had my day.

TOM FRIEND

It is your day. Now, drag your swollen self out of here. Get away from her.

UNCLE SWEETHEART

You're the scum of all scum. You should never have been born, you pickled punk.

With that, Tom Friend slowly and methodically takes a chair and smashes Uncle Sweetheart. He grabs Uncle Sweetheart's collar and starts to strangle him. Pagan grabs Tom Friend and starts to scream.

PAGAN LACE

Tom, don't, don't.

TOM FRIEND

No, I'm gonna win you a prize.

PAGAN LACE

Tom--

TOM FRIEND

(choking Uncle Sweetheart)

I just hit the lotto jackpot. Won the booby prize. A dead dog.

In the midst of this tense scene, Jack Fate wanders past with his old guitar. He is clearly leaving. Although he'd rather not, he can't help but see what's transpiring. We see him at this crossroads. He starts to leave again, but can't. He stops, considers his options. He knows he has none. Reluctantly, but inevitably, he approaches the conflict. He steps up to Tom Friend and pushes him back.

JACK FATE

He's done nothing to you.

Tom Friend and Uncle Sweetheart stop struggling as Tom Friend turns to Jack Fate.

(CONTINUED)

75 CONTINUED: (3)

75

TOM FRIEND

(incredulous)

You're gonna try to protect him?
 You're gonna try to kill me? That
 sack of shit? That wooden-faced
 moron? I wouldn't spit on him. Him
 and his mucky, lying tongue. He
 screwed you over just like everybody
 else.

Jack Fate and Tom Friend grapple. Jack Fate pushes an uneasy Tom Friend, who trips over a chair and falls. Jack Fate breaks a bottle, holds it to Tom Friend's throat. He's got his foot on his chest. He suddenly backs off. Tom Friend, as he gets up, pulls out a pistol. He aims first at Sweetheart, then at Fate, but hesitates. He hears the words of the fortune teller: *Someone is praying that you'll escape this trap. Victory comes from avoiding it altogether or running swiftly from it.* Just then, in Tom Friend's moment of doubt and hesitation Bobby Cupid comes out of nowhere with Blind Lemon's guitar and smashes Tom Friend repeatedly until Tom Friend falls, and all that's left of the guitar is the neck. Bobby Cupid then plunges the jagged edge of the neck into Tom Friend, as the others look on, sprayed and splattered with Tom Friend's blood. Pagan Lace screams by the fallen, dying body of Tom Friend. She lies on top of him and weeps.

PAGAN

Tom! Don't leave me! Don't leave me!

TOM FRIEND

(faint whisper)

Once when I was passing a cathedral, a white dove came flying by and dropped a twig it was carrying in its beak at my feet. Poetry, painting and music. It's funny. I never thought about those things until now.

He dies.. Pagan Lace looks up. She hears -- nothing. She smiles and hugs Tom Friend's lifeless body. We hear the sound of sirens in the distance. The two crew guys approach and kneel down to check Tom's pulse.

CREW GUY #1

This guy's gone. Somebody better call the meat wagon.

(CONTINUED)

75 CONTINUED: (4)

75

JACK FATE
(to Bobby Cupid)
You better get out of here. Go out
the back way.

BOBBY CUPID
You coming, too?

JACK FATE
I'm staying here.

He hands Bobby Cupid his own guitar. Bobby takes it,
they exchange a glance, and Bobby is off. Uncle
Sweetheart is distraught. Jack comforts him.

UNCLE SWEETHEART
Ah, man. I didn't realize it would
come down like this.

JACK FATE
How would you know?

The soldiers enter holding Nina at gunpoint.

POLICEMAN #2
All right? Everybody stay where you
are. Anybody see anything?

There is silence. They prod Nina with their rifles.

NINA
I saw it. I saw it all. I was right
there. He did it.

She points at Jack Fate.

UNCLE SWEETHEART
What?!

Pagan Lace looks up, confused, but doesn't say anything.

JACK FATE
That's okay.

NINA
Yeah, he did it. I was there. I saw
it all. He's responsible. It might
have been a random act, but you know
what? You can put his whole life on
trial.

(CONTINUED)

75 CONTINUED: (5)

75

They put the cuffs on Jack and lead him away. Nina is freed. She exchanges a glance with Jack Fate and exits. Uncle Sweetheart kneels down next to Pagan Lace and begins to rifle through Tom Friend's pockets. He finds money and valuables, but then decides not to keep them. He throws them back down on the body and sighs.

UNCLE SWEETHEART

There's so much love, light, beauty,
humor and happiness in the world.
Everything is always right there, but
you can't see it. Sometimes, after
awhile there's no nothing. It all
comes down to that.

Pagan Lace takes pity on Uncle Sweetheart. She takes his bottle from him and in an act of compassion, connection, and even liberation takes a drink. PERCY and BLUNT appear. Uncle Sweetheart sees them.

UNCLE SWEETHEART (cont'd)

Ah, yeah.

PERCY

For everything in life you do,
Sweetheart, there's a price. You pay
it up front, in the beginning, or you
pay it at the back-end.

They lead him away. We can hear the sirens and commotion outside. The two crew guys gather their tools.

CREW GUY #1

Bugles of madness.

CREW GUY #2

What'd you say?

CREW GUY #1

Nothing. I didn't say nothing. I
didn't see nothing. I don't know
nothing.

CREW GUY #2

Yeah, well. That's a good way to be.
It's better to know nothing than to
think you know something that isn't
so.

(CONTINUED)

75 CONTINUED: (6)

75

They exit.

CUT TO:

76 EXT. SOUNDSTAGE FACILITY - DAY

76

As the doors open and bright sunlight floods in we follow Jack Fate into the police car and the police car as it drives away.

CUT TO:

77 EXT./INT. POLICE CAR -DAY

77

As it drives away, it gets caught in a massive traffic jam. Up ahead, we see why. It's a state funeral for Jack's father, the President. The slow procession marches down the boulevard. In back, Jack Fate observes the funeral procession as it passes. Finally, there is a break in the funeral procession and the police car drives through. We hear the preacher on the radio.

RADIO PREACHER (V.O.)

God has turned his back on this nation...The same god that creates the diseases and the plagues, also creates the medicines and the cures...Gods, being invulnerable, they cannot have nobility. They do not know self-sacrifice...God does not suffer...He doesn't feel pain...He is not a courageous God...Human beings can be courageous or cowardly. Neither of these make up any of god's nature. The gods don't determine outcome. They control passions. That's how they get people to do their bidding...Man has the mind of God, but the body of dust...All of humankind is a slave race and was meant to be from the beginning...Will man destroy the earth to move on? Is that his destiny? We'll wait to find out...What nourishes gods? The smell of fear. The gods get fat on fear...These gods left before the Bible was written.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

77 CONTINUED:

77

RADIO PREACHER (cont'd)

Man was left on his own and yet that is not the end of it. Ask yourselves a question, people. Are you humble before god?

PULL OUT, as the police car drives away, past the funeral procession.

JACK FATE (V.O.)

...I was always a singer and maybe no more than that. Sometimes it's not enough to know the meaning of things. Sometimes we have to know what things don't mean as well. Like, what does it mean to not know what the person you love is capable of? Things fall apart, especially all the neat order of rules and laws. The way we look at the world is the way we really are. See it from a fair garden, everything looks cheerful. Climb to a higher mountain, and you see plunder and murder. Truth and beauty are in the eye of the beholder. I stopped trying to figure everything out a long time ago.

MUSIC: "Cold Irons Bound" (reprise)

FADE OUT.

THE END

