

FACE PAINTERS
BY
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SCREENPLAY EXCERPT

SCENES 161-174 (2ND HALF OPENER)

c/o

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EXT. GRAVETTI & SONS FUNERAL HOME - FRONT STREET - MORNING

It's a blistering hot day in Bay Ridge, Brooklyn. A car sits overheated, kids romp by a streaming fire hydrant.

FUNERAL HOME - PARKING LOT - SAME TIME

On the funeral home, Buono's new CASKET WOODSHOP EXTENSION is under way: carpenters delegate, workers swing from beams.

Sweaty Papa Luca sits under the searing SUN, directing the carpenters like a delusional conductor; the old man's paid no mind.

Away from the racket, a black chauffeur dusts off a LIMO.

INT. GRAVETTI & SONS FUNERAL HOME - PREP ROOM - DAY

The door sits ajar. Two young dapper Wall Street gents snoop in on Donka, the gypsy, as she dresses a corpse.

HALLWAY - SAME TIME

Michael sneaks up on his pals and "BOO!" They jump and run-

OFFICE

-barreling in and laughing up a storm. Behind the desk, Elias Wartels has his feet up while on the phone; he muffles his own laughs. Everyone reaches for their cigars and drinks-

GENT 1

Whowee, we're all rattled out!

MICHAEL

What a bunch of fems! Drink up, girls, it's a celebration!

Michael tops off scotch all around. Elias finishes up with his call. He reaches for some car mags laying on the desk.

ELIAS

356, 911...Mike, tell me you're not eyeing out a Porsche.

MICHAEL

Well, gals, I'm not one to brag, but sure, I'm bragging!

The pals move in on the car mags. Elias grabs Michael's ass.

ELIAS

Brilliant, my chum!

Michael swats Elias' hand away from him. Molly, Michael's Teddy Girl squeeze, enters with a tray of-

MOLLY
Pigs in a Blanket!

GENTS 1 & 2
Aw, twitchin! / Outta sight!

Michael grabs Molly and, for Elias' eyes to see, kisses her big time.

EXT. ROSENBERG LUMBER YARD - LATER THAT DAY

Buono and young Scarlett load the hearse with lumber; they stop to dry off. A yardman hands Buono a RECEIPT.

EXT. BOULEVARD - DAY

Hearse travels with long planks hanging out its rear doors.

INT. HEARSE - SAME TIME (MOVING)

Buono drives. Scarlett sits close with *To Kill a Mockingbird* open for Buono to try to read. She helps him with the words.

BUONO
(reading)
When Atticus looked down at me,
I saw the eeex-preeesion on his
face that always made me exa,
expee, expeeect - aww, phooey!

He huffs and shoves the book away - she swats him with it.

SCARLETT
Fudge nuggets! Scout's gonna be
an old fart by the time you
learn to read! Expe, expe, duh!

She pushes away from him and pouts; Buono really enjoys this.

EXT. GRAVETTI & SONS - FRONT STREET - DAY

The hearse nears just as the LIMO is exiting the parking lot. Buono spots the-

CUFFLINK SLEEVE OF ELIAS WAVING BACK.

INT. GRAVETTI & SONS - LUCA'S OFFICE - DAY

In Luca's chair, drunkards Michael and Molly smooch behind a desk defiled by booze, food scraps, and heaped-up ashtrays.

Buono watches them from the doorway. He enters, unfolding the lumber receipt. Startled, the two straighten up.

BUONO

Pop's fryin' like bacon out there.

Michael titters, prompting Molly to do the same.

BUONO (CONT'D)

You least bring'm some water?

MICHAEL

Righty-o, Molly was just on that.

MOLLY

I'll go fetch pop a nice ice tea.

BUONO

Place smells like a knock shop.

Molly scowls out the door. Buono stares at Michael. Thick silence sets in. Michael raises his hands and lets them flop.

BUONO (CONT'D)

Not even water, Mike?

MICHAEL

I forgot.

BUONO

How?

MICHAEL

I failed to remember.

Michael flips a cigar stub into his mouth and lights up. He rebuffs Buono's glare with a *Key Largo* "Johnny Rocco" impersonation.

MICHAEL (CONT'D)

After living in the USA for more than thirty-five years, they call me an undesirable alien. Yeah, me, Johnny Rocco, like I was a dirty Red or somethin'!

BUONO

Michael, what if a client walked in here?

MICHAEL

That, my friend, would be an anatomical wonder.

Michael snickers. The stub FALLS from his lips; he stretches down, searching the carpet. Buono places the receipt down on the desk. He spots the—

OPEN CHECKBOOK AND LEDGER UNDER THE CAR MAGS.

MICHAEL (CONT'D)

How 'bout that extension, huh?
Smashing, simply smashing! It's
going to be an entire showroom
devoted to your "chef d'oeuvres!"

BUONO

Can't wait... So, your friends,
they just come by to say hello?

MICHAEL

Sure, interrelation exchanges
come in many lengths. Hey, that's
what you lack; human interaction,
with the vertical, that is.

BUONO

(off the checkbook)
Maybe—

MICHAEL

You should go marry Scarlett's
mom, yeah, Abbey the widow, ha,
have yourselves a couple of half-
Jews — I'm kidding, hehehe.

BUONO

Go get rinsed, and let the vamp
drive ya home; you're all sloshed.

MICHAEL

Hey, who you calling sloshed?

BUONO LUNGES IN, SNATCHING UP THE CHECKBOOK AND LEDGER.
ITEMS CRASH, MICHAEL ALMOST FALLING OUT OF HIS CHAIR.

Buono heads out with the books.

BUONO

And this better be all square.

MICHAEL

Oh? And by who's inquiring eyes,
yours? You can't even read a
stupid lunch menu! Go on, read
me some of that ledger without
your yids helpin' ya!

Buono charges back. Michael snatches up the lumber RECEIPT.

MICHAEL (CONT'D)

Here, forget that. Read this!

Buono restrains himself. He stares at the receipt more and more. Michael shakes his head...drops back into his chair.

MICHAEL (CONT'D)

Some conglomerate I got mixed up with here... Anyways...anyways.

BUONO

Why all the hate, Mike? I mean, who ever give you a bum wrap? And after all papa done for you?

MICHAEL

Papa done for me? Papa?

BUONO

Yeah, papa. You'd think you outta be sharing some of your talents with me, no?

Michael scoffs.

BUONO (CONT'D)

You got big college brains all thanks to him, and you still...
(beat)
Look at this office!

MICHAEL

You have no brains and you still, a jerk. And papa wanted me gone.

BUONO

No, you choose you friends after he done raise ya like top royalty.

Michael gulps the last of a shallow glass.

MICHAEL

That is unadulterated poop.

BUONO

Then why, Mike? What, you were too embarrassed hangin' with us dirty immigrants? Didn't like being called a guinea? A dumb dago? Right, Mr. upper class, always lookin' down at us?

MICHAEL

Hey, I didn't choose to be a bum-

BUONO

No, I did. I miss the cufflinks just to keep papa sane after what happen to mama. And then I busted my ass for years just to cover all your schoolin'? That's poop!

MICHAEL

Oh, you're such a man.

BUONO

All this Wall Street stench you drag in here like a alley cat, and you still go swelling with 'em after they can ya ass?!

-Michael waves dismissively.

BUONO (CONT'D)

Yes, you choose them instead!

MICHAEL

Instead of what, what?! Snotty Kleenex, praising all these dead losers 24/7? What about me, huh?!

(beat)

You never wondered why papa put me in all those private schools and colleges, and you got zilch?

BUONO

He loved you in a different way, I guess.

MICHAEL

Aw, blow.

BUONO

And he wanted to get it right with you this time round.

MICHAEL

You're wet... He thought I would return all cured and normal, HA, me normal! That's why I didn't hang around. And he can't even explain things no more- HAHA, he's spent!

BUONO

And you're loaded.

MICHAEL

And you ain't shittin'...I needed answers; no dice 'cause he's off to palookaville. Now I just sit here in this dump: rugs all reeky formaldehyde, cheap paneling on these fucking walls, no Venetian, no chrome! I can't even breathe in here! Dying, I'm fucking dying!

BUONO

This was all yours to make better.

MICHAEL

Well, I didn't want it!

BUONO

Well, it don't look like that now.

(beat)

And don't you go mocking what me and papa done around here, you hear? This here's honest work; yeah, paneling ya ungrateful shit.

MICHAEL

Pfft, what a man, what a man...

(picking up a glass)

You don't know.

BUONO

I know you left papa with me, me, the village goofus—

SLAPPING the glass out of Michael's hand—

BUONO (CONT'D)

Yeah, I know me good, but now, I'm gonna run this show, see? No more flack over my caskets, no more flack 'bout helpin' Negros; say yid one more time, and I'll beat your face with a dictionary—make fun of me you ain't gonna.

(exiting)

You're outta here 'til you're done with all the boozing.

MICHAEL

Until...oh yeah? Look at all I've done around here, and this is the thanks I get? Buono! Buonoooo!

Michael tries yanking a piece of paneling off the wall.

MICHAEL (CONT'D)
 I earned indulgence, you hear me,
 Buono?! I deserve indulgence, I
 aaaaam indulgence!

EXT. GRAVETTI & SONS - PARKING LOT - MOMENTS LATER

Buono's up on the woodshop extension, wildly hammering away; workers stand clear. All eyes turn on MICHAEL AND MOLLY—

—tripping out the back door in a heated ARGUMENT. Molly loses a heel; Michael drop-kicks it clear across the parking lot. He struts for his ragtop, dangling his KEYS for Buono to see. He stumbles over the driver's door...

MICHAEL
 Hahaha, he's all yours, pop!

...and CRANKS the engine over.

WHEELS SCREECHING IN REVERSE, THE RAGTOP SLAMS INTO A TRUCK.

Workers FREAK OUT. The ragtop BARRELS into the street and out of view, Molly giving chase on one heel—

MOLLY
 "Michaeeeeel!"

Buono spots his father in the attic window, directing the chaos like an oblivious conductor. Buono WHALES his hammer—

EXT. BROOKLYN BRIDGE - MANHATTAN-BOUND - DAY

Buono cruises on his motorcycle.

EXT. FINANCIAL DISTRICT - STREET - DAY

SKYSCRAPERS tower down over Buono. He searches for the one building he accompanied Michael to for their big meeting with Elias. He shoves past over the SIDEWALKS; the waves of *suits* are overwhelming him. He doesn't know which way to turn, turning and turning until spotting CUFFLINKS passing by—

—Buono grabs the dapper man; the STRANGER RECOILS in fear. Buono is SMACKED out of nowhere.

EXT. SIDEWALK CAFÉ - MOMENTS LATER

Buono tries reading a posted lunch menu out loud... Elites stare.

END EXCERPT