

DEATH TO SMOOCHY

by

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Early Draft

**FOR EDUCATIONAL
PURPOSES ONLY**

BEGIN CREDITS

EXT. KIDNET STUDIO -C - EVENING

A man in a puffy foam-rubber rhinoceros costume dancing under the bright friendly lights of a television studio. Another rhino and various foam-rubber animals dance behind him to the happy MUSIC. The rhino finishes his number and takes a bow. A bleacher full of kids bursts into wild applause.

INT. BACKSTAGE - MOMENTS LATER

After the taping. The rhino lumbers down the hallway toward wardrobe. He is suddenly grabbed by two large men and dragged out through the exit into...

INT. DARK PARKING GARAGE

... where several thugs in overcoats emerge from the shadows and start beating him with lead pipes. One of the men pulls out a GUN and SHOTS the rhino several times. The SHOTS REVERBERATE through the empty garage.
FINAL CREDIT:

CUT TO BLACK:

SUPERIMPOSE: ONE YEAR EARLIER

FADE UP ON:

INT. TELEVISION STUDIO - DAY

It's the taping of another children's show -- "Rainbow Randolph and the Krinkle Kids." RANDOLPH SMILEY, a clean-cut man with a happy face and yellow bow tie, dances through Rainbowland with the "Krinkle Kids" (little people in top hats). He sings one of his signature songs: "Friends Come In All Sizes." One of the main Krinkle Kids -- ANGELO PIKE -- dances behind him.

RANDOLPH

(singing)

'Friends come in all sizes
That's a fact! It's True!
All colors of the rainbow
from Mauve to Blue...

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

RANDOLPH (CONT'D)
 Their names may not be different
 and their shoes may not match
 One might say 'grasp' while the
 other says 'snatch'
 Some like to toss while others
 like to caaaaatch... Beeee-
 caaaause...
 Friends come in all sizes
 Take it from me! Golly Gee! Size
 never matters when you want some
 friendly patter
 From a pal who is true and can
 lift you when you're blue
 You can count on him and he can
 count on yooouuuu!
 It's true... that...
 (big finish)
 Friends come in all sizes!'

DISSOLVE TO:

MONTAGE - RAINBOW RANDOLPH MERCHANDISE

"Sugar Rainbows Cereal," plastic toys lined up on store shelves, kids playing with Randolph dolls, kids eating "Rainbow Potato Chips" and "Rainbow Candies." A "Rainbow Burster," a kind of gun that shoots plastic rainbows. Marquees announcing upcoming live appearances, etc. We get the picture. Rainbow Randolph is the king of the kid shows.

INT. DIMLY-LIT BAR - NIGHT

A suburban-looking HUSBAND and WIFE enter. They find Rainbow Randolph sitting alone, drinking a Scotch. Hair slicked back, sans bow tie, the friendly face no longer looks so friendly. He nods for them to sit down. After a nervous beat, the Husband puts a briefcase on the table and slides it to Randolph. Randolph takes a gulp of his Scotch. He unsnaps the briefcase and opens it. Five grand stares him in the face.

HUSBAND

So... uh... you'll make sure my
 boy dances up front, right? Where
 he'll get the most camera time?

Randolph slams the briefcase shut, startling the couple.

RANDOLPH

You want your kid on the show?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

HUSBAND
Of... of course.

WIFE
Yes, very much.

RANDOLPH
Then don't tell me how to run my
fucking business.

HUSBAND
No, no, we were just --

Randolph rises. He takes a final gulp of his Scotch and
picks up the briefcase.

RANDOLPH
I'll call you if a spot opens up.

He starts to walk off. Suddenly, the Husband and Wife
jump up from the table holding guns.

HUSBAND
Freeze, you cocksucker!

WIFE
Drop the briefcase!

Federal agents storm into the bar and surround Randolph.

EXT. TIMES SQUARE - DAWN

Bundles of the morning editions are tossed onto the curb
from passing trucks. The various headlines blare:

"RAINBOW RANDOLPH BUSTED ACCEPTING BRIBE"

"FCC PROBES KID SHOW BIZ"

"CORRUPTION IN KRINKLELAND"

INT. TELEVISION STUDIO - DAY

The Rainbow Randolph/Krinkle Kid set is being dismantled.
Backdrops are rolled up and the giant rainbow centerpiece
is wheeled off. Workers with push brooms sweep up tons
of glittery "magic Rainbow dust."

INT. NETWORK BOARDROOM - KIDNET - DAY

We are TIGHT ON the sweating face of a MAN who looks like
he's about to be executed.

CUT BACK TO:

STOKES

is standing at the end of a long conference table as the NETWORK BRASS glares at him.

STOKES

(addressing the brass)
Gentlemen, let me be the first to say, in all sobriety, that I'm as shocked and outraged as all of --

The network CEO, a hog of a man, cuts him off.

CEO

Save it for the papers, Stokes. We've got nervous sponsors and an angry public -- a combination uglier than two monkeys fucking. What are you doing about it?

STOKES

Well, sir, I'm currently in the process of compiling a list of viable replacements and it's my hope...

CEO

Clean replacements? With background checks? I assure you, Mr. Stokes, this network cannot survive another Rainbow Randolph. The goddamn P.R. department looks like the Jim Jones camp.

Another EXECUTIVE chimes in.

EXECUTIVE #1

Remember, Stokes, this was your dog that crapped on our rug.

EXECUTIVE #2

We trusted you, Frank. And now we're in a tight spot. We have to post our quarterly earnings next month, for Christ's sake.

CEO

Whoever takes that slot has to be a straight arrow. Clean as a whistle.

EXECUTIVE #3

Right. Someone who'll take the heat off. One of those sweater types. Any chance of luring Fred Rogers away from P.B.S.?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

EXECUTIVE #4

Yeah, if we back up the Brinks truck.

EXECUTIVE #1

No way. The idea now is to stop the hemorrhaging.

EXECUTIVE #2

You better fix this, Stokes. Get us a white bread replacement, fast. Bland, milk toast. Not a speck of controversy.

A giant hand slams on the table. All heads snap. The CEO drags his fingers along the shiny mahogany. Deafening sound.

CEO

(calm and measured)
Squeaky fucking clean.

INT. STOKES' OFFICE - DAY

Stokes sits behind his mahogany desk, sipping a glass of wine as he goes over potential Randolph replacements with NORA BISHOP, his pretty protege.

STOKES

Bumble Bee Billy?

NORA

(reading from a list)
Wife beater.

STOKES

Square Dance Danny?

NORA

Still appealing the mail fraud thing.

STOKES

Skippy Black and the Tippy Trolls?

NORA

Black was deported, and the trolls... well, who gives a shit.

Nora kicks the table in frustration.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

NORA

This is impossible. If I ever see that Rainbow Randolph again I'll strangle him. Choke the life out of him. Squeeze his scrawny neck until his eyes pop out of his skull and bounce off the walls...

STOKES

Before indulging such cheery fantasies, let's just concentrate on saving my job. Shall we?

NORA

Sorry, Frank.

Stokes flips through a thick stack of files. He suddenly stops at one.

STOKES

What's going on with Sheldon Mopes these days.

Nora laughs.

NORA

Oh my God. Have we sunk to that level already? Smoochy the Rhino? What a sap.

STOKES

Sap's just the pill we need right now. Mopes is a straight arrow. Always has been.

NORA

The guy can't get arrested, Frank. He can't even break into the birthday party circuit. Last I heard he was working hospitals and nursing homes. He's a joke.

Stokes stands up and walks around the room.

STOKES

The truth of the matter is, a successful children's show has always depended on two simple elements: a fuzzy costume and a lot of hype. Strip away the foam rubber and the network money and they're all jokes. Marginal talents.. cabaret acts... off-Broadway runoff...

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

NORA

I probably have ten acts in my development file -- acts I've been cultivating -- that are more deserving than Sheldon Mopes.

STOKES

And each one a moral question mark. Something I can't risk at the moment.

NORA

(frustrated)

We can do better than this guy, Frank. He brings nothing to the table.

STOKES

Except ethics. With Mopes, there's never been a whiff of controversy. The man's an ethical, harmless, cornball. In short, a glass of milk on two legs.

Stokes stops pacing.

NORA

Don't ask me to do it. You know I'll do anything for you, but please... not this...

Stokes gazes out the window at the city.

STOKES

Go find Smoochy.

EXT. CONEY ISLAND - EARLY EVENING

The lighted Ferris wheel spins CENTER FRAME. We CRANE DOWN and eventually LAND ON a side street with the amusement park looming in the b.g. We're in FRONT of a small building. The half-lit neon sign reads: CONEY ISLAND METHADONE CENTER. We DRIFT THROUGH the double doors THROUGH the reception area where random junkies loiter and fill out paperwork. We CONTINUE DOWN a narrow hallway as the faint sound of someone SINGING and playing the GUITAR INCREASES. We finally burst THROUGH another set of doors marked "Treatment Room." The singing now fills our ears as we PUSH IN ON the "performer" -- a big, puffy, orange rhinoceros. Smoochy. Or to be more specific, SHELDON MOPES.

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CONTINUED:

Smoochy sits on a stool with his guitar and sings to the patients as they stand in line before a sliding glass window, where a nurse hands each person a little cup of methadone which they immediately drink.

The Smoochy costume is a mass of misshapen orange foam rubber that exposes Sheldon's painted face in the front. A multi-colored horn protrudes from his forehead.

SMOOCHY (SHELDON)
 (singing to the tune
 of 'She'll be Comin'
 round the Mountain')
 'We'll get that monkey off your
 back,
 Yes we will, yes we will
 We'll get that monkey off your
 back,
 Yes we will...'

'We'll get that monkey off your
 back
 And get your life right back on
 track
 If you'll just give up the smack
 Yes you will, yes you will!!'

The song ends. A few baffled junkies applaud.

SMOOCHY
 Thanks, fellas. I'm rooting for
 you!

We PAN AWAY FROM Sheldon TO the exit. Standing there in her coat, looking mortified, is Nora.

INT. RECEPTION AREA - SHORT WHILE LATER

Nora sits in the reception area. Sheldon emerges in his street clothes. He carries Smoochy's body on a hanger over his shoulder and carries a large shopping bag which holds Smoochy's head.

NORA
 Mr. Mopes?

Sheldon stops.

SHELDON
 Yeah?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

NORA

I, uh, saw your performance tonight. Very...
(searching)
... spirited.

SHELDON

Really? Thanks. I would've done a longer set if that guy hadn't pulled a knife on the security guard. Once the pepper spray starts flyin', that's it for the encores.

NORA

Yes, that did put a damper on the evening, didn't it?

SHELDON

Are you a new patient? On the juice, as we say?

NORA

Ah, no. But it's sweet of you to assume so.

She hands him her card. He reads it.

SHELDON

'Nora Bishop. V.P. of Development. Kidnet.'
(to Nora)
Good gravy. You work for Kidnet?

NORA

As stated.

Sheldon grabs her hand and shakes it.

SHELDON

Well, it's a pleasure to meet you, Nora. A real honor. Hey, you hungry?

EXT. CONEY ISLAND BOARDWALK - NATHAN'S HOT DOGS - SHORT WHILE LATER

Sheldon and Nora stand at the crowded counter at Nathan's. Sheldon ravenously eats his sloppily-garnished, oddly colored hot dog. Nora winces as she watches him.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

SHELDON

(with full mouth)

Soy dogs... never thought I'd live to see the day. Organic, rich in natural protein, and nobody gets killed. Although I do feel bad for the beans. Just kidding. Sure you don't want one?

NORA

Believe it or not, no.

He takes another bite.

SHELDON

So anyway, like I was saying, people always tell me, 'You gotta network, Sheldon... you gotta sell yourself... or you'll be playing the drug clinics and shopping centers the rest of your life.' And you know what I tell 'em?

NORA

I haven't the foggiest.

SHELDON

I tell 'em, it's not about the old handshake and back slap game. It's not about adding fuel to the shlock machine. It's about doing good work. Having integrity. Making people happy and delivering a positive message. Foundations are built with concrete, not plaster of Paris!

He pulls the stained, misshapen Smoochy head from the shopping bag.

SHELDON

This is concrete! This is integrity!

NORA

(calmly)

I can see that.

Sheldon realizes his voice was getting too loud.

SHELDON

Sorry. As you can imagine, living by your convictions can be a little stressful at times.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

NORA

We all have our cross to bear.

SHELDON

See, I was raised by my grandfather, and Grandpop paved driveways for a living...

NORA

Are we going into a story?

SHELDON

Thing is, he didn't really pave them. Just covered them with black paint. Of course, once the first rain came along, people realized they'd been swindled. I vowed to myself back then that I'd never make a living through deception. Never. Whadda ya think of them apples?

Nora looks glassy-eyed. She takes a deep breath.

NORA

The reason I'm here today, Mr. Mopes, as fate would have it, Kidnet is currently looking for a performer with... convictions. And integrity. Someone like...

She almost chokes on the word.

NORA

... yourself.

Sheldon laughs.

SHELDON

Yeah, right. Got any more jokes?

NORA

I don't think I could top that one.

SHELDON

Hold the phone. You're telling me that Kidnet is finally ready to do a show of Smoochy quality? Of Smoochy caliber?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

NORA

(dryly)

Yes... I believe we're ready to push ourselves to that level.

SHELDON

I knew this day would come! After all these years I finally meet someone in the business who gets what I do. Who gets what I'm all about. You get me, don't you, Nora?

NORA

I'm afraid so.

SHELDON

Well, Miss V.P. of Development... let's go make history!

CUT TO:

PREP MONTAGE

KIDNET STUDIO WARDROBE ROOM. A team of designers and seamstresses cut, sew and shape endless sheets of orange foam rubber. Sheldon stands on a wooden box as he's measured from head to toe. On the wall is a blueprint labeled "Smoochy the Rhino -- REDESIGN."

A costume designer walks over with the new Smoochy head and places it on Sheldon.

As seamstresses fit him with the new Smoochy costume, various signs and billboards FLOAT THROUGH the FRAME, trumpeting copy like: "IT'S ALMOST SMOOCHY TIME!" "GET READY TO BE SMOOCHED, AMERICA!" "ONLY TWO MORE WEEKS TILL SMOOCHY!"

KIDNET STUDIO -C.

Sets, props, and camera equipment are rolled into the studio. Through a SERIES of DISSOLVES we see the Smoochyland Magic Jungle take shape.

KIDNET STUDIO -C - LATER

A choreographer maps out a number for Smoochy and the "Rhinettes." (The Rhinettes are the former Krinkle Kid little people with horns strapped to their foreheads.)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Nora and Stokes watch from the wings with a mixture of uncertainty and disgust.

DISSOLVE BACK TO:

WARDROBE ROOM

A seamstress zips up the back of the finished, redesigned Smoochy costume. Sheldon stands proudly before the design team. Smoochy is now television ready: smoothed out, more colorful, less lumpy and exuding sunshiny happiness.

DISSOLVE TO:

STUDIO -C - BACKSTAGE

Smoochy is about to enter with the Rhinettes. ANGELO, a former Krinkle Kid, stands beside him.

SMOOCHY

Angelo, you were always my favorite Krinkle Kid. The way you'd click your heels during the 'Jellybean Jam.' Real artistry. I'm honored to have you as a Rhinette.

ANGELO

A job's a job.

STUDIO -C - PRACTICE TAPING

Suddenly lights up in all its multi-colored Smoochyland glory. The bleachers are full of children.

ANNOUNCER (O.S.)

Hey, kids! Who's your favorite rhino?

The kids in the bleachers all scream in unison.

KIDS

Smoochy!

Smoochy bounds out on stage followed by the Rhinettes who form a dancing circle around him.

SMOOCHY

Hiya, kids!

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

KIDS

Hi, Smoochy!

SMOOCHY

It's gonna be a fantabulous day in Smoochyland!!

The kids cheer as Smoochy and the Rhinettes featuring Angelo Pike, go into their "It's a Fantabulous Day in Smoochyland" number -- a catchy, bouncy song and dance routine that plays out in the sugar-coated jungle of Smoochyland.

SMOOCHY

(singing)

'Ohhhh... it's a fantabulous day in Smoochy-land/Let's have a great big cheer for the Smoochy-land band/We'll dance with our jungle pals, won't that be grand/Oh, it's a fantabulous day in Smoochy-land!'

Smoochy dances right UP TO the CAMERA, FILLING the FRAME with his friendly, puffy face.

END of prep MONTAGE.

EXT. DOCK BY RIVER - NIGHT (POURING RAIN)

A disheveled Randolph paces on a deserted dock. The Brooklyn Bridge looms in the b.g. A car pulls up in the b.g. Stokes gets out. Randolph moves under an awning.

RANDOLPH

I was starting to think that maybe you weren't coming.

STOKES

I agreed to meet you, didn't I? I had a dinner engagement.

Randolph takes a swig from a flask.

RANDOLPH

Really? You know, I used to have dinner engagements. Sometimes four, five a night. Dinner... drinks... I was the toast of the fucking town.

STOKES

Don't start, Randolph. Please.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

RANDOLPH

(voice rising)

Cars, boats, whores and horses, I had 'em all. When I walked into a restaurant, ten guys reached for my hat. When I stood up to take a piss, they cleared the rest room. I'd walk down the street and traffic stopped, mouths gaped. You know why? You know why, Frank?

(now shouting)

I was Rainbow fucking Randolph! That's why!

STOKES

Are you through?

RANDOLPH

What? You're in a hurry? You don't have time for me? The guy who earned for you? The guy who put those fucking suits on your back and the pheasant au vin in your Brooklyn mouth?

STOKES

I think it's fair to say we helped each other.

Randolph suddenly breaks down.

RANDOLPH

(pleading)

You gotta fix it, Frank. You gotta get me my slot back.

He now clings to Stokes' lapels.

RANDOLPH

How can I sit around while that rhinoceros... that horned carpetbagger gets a free ride on my dime? You and I have history, Frank! Please!

Stokes pries Randolph's hands from his overcoat.

STOKES

There's nothing I can do for you. Nothing. You're a pariah. I can't even be seen with you.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

RANDOLPH

Don't do this to me, Frank. I'm in deep, deep shit. They kicked me out of the corporate penthouse... I got bookies breathing down my neck. I'm homeless! Don't you hear what I'm saying? I'm not gonna make it! The clock's ticking! Put yourself in my shoes, for Christ's sake!

STOKES

The ugly truth is, your shoes have become my shoes. As long as the rhino's on the air, everything's by the book. No skim, no percentage. Nothing. The network wanted squeaky clean and they got it. And believe me, Mopes is sparkling.

He looks Randolph squarely in the eye.

STOKES

You're totally broke? You don't have a dime left to your name?

RANDOLPH

Yes! Exactly! That's what I'm trying to tell you!

Randolph looks at him hopefully as Stokes straightens his tie.

STOKE

Don't contact me again, Randy. Ever.

Stokes walks off. Randolph watches him disappear through the mist.

RANDOLPH

You'll get yours, Frank! The rhino too! Do you hear me?! The wheels are turning!

Stokes is gone. Randolph takes a swig from his flask and wipes his chin with his sleeve. He stares out at the river.

RANDOLPH

(quietly to himself)

Sooner or later, even a guy who's squeaky clean falls into mud.

THUNDER CLAP.

EXT. DOCK - HIGH OVERHEAD SHOT

of the docks as Randolph stands alone before the river.

FADE OUT.

FADE IN:

INT. NORA BISHOP'S OFFICE - CLOSE ON LITTLE MECHANICAL
SMOOCHY THE RHINO - DAY

as it erratically limps forward before DROPPING OUT OF
FRAME.

WIDER

The wind-up Smoochy lays upside-down on the carpet next to Nora's desk, legs grinding lamely in the air. Various Smoochy items are spread out on her desk top. A restless-looking Sheldon and a few members of Nora's staff are in on the meeting.

NORA

Again, these are just prototypes.
I've been assured by FunZone that
all the bugs will be worked out
before Christmas.

Sheldon raises his hand. Nora ignores him and looks at her watch.

NORA

Okay, so let's recap before we
break up...

(refers to notes)

Yes to the Smoochy ice pops. No to
the Smoochy string cheese. And
we're in a dick-measuring contest
with Brown & Brown over the
shampoo split.

Sheldon suddenly stands up.

SHELDON

Okay, time out, people! If I may
interject, I think we're putting
the cart before the horse here...

Nora throws him an icy look.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

SHELDON

Smoochy's still earning the trust of the kids. We don't want to compromise that by asking them to buy shampoo and cheese. How 'bout we just concentrate on doing the best show possible. Huh? Without all the bells and whistles and rickata-rackita. What do you say, guys?

Nora casually picks up a Smoochy Frisbee from her desk and sails it toward the open door. It lands in the hallway.

NORA

(monotone)

Oh, damn.

SHELDON

No problem, I'll get it.

He walks out to the hallway.

NORA

(to staffer)

Shut the door please, John.

John shuts the door.

NORA

Now lock it.

He locks it.

NORA

Thank you.

EXT. KIDNET BUILDING - NIGHT

Nora emerges from the revolving door of the Kidnet building which is located in the heart of Times Square and heads down Broadway. Sheldon emerges from the building.

SHELDON

Hey, Nora, wait up.

She keeps walking. Sheldon catches up and walks alongside her, occasionally getting jostled by passersby.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

SHELDON

Good meeting today. I thought we tackled some hot issues. Although, I'll be honest, there were a few times that I felt my voice wasn't being heard.

NORA

I think that's a conservative estimate.

SHELDON

I just want the show to have some weight, you know? Some substance. Silly songs, sure -- but with a message. Pop quiz: How many original compositions are in the Smoochy songbook?

NORA

Do you sense my complete lack of interest?

SHELDON

Try two thousand. Covering every topic from how yummy vegetables are to the importance of donating plasma. Don't you get it, Nora? I'm a valuable resource. Use me.

Nora stops. She looks Sheldon in the eye for the first time.

NORA

Can I make this real easy for you?

SHELDON

Sure.

NORA

The only reason you're on TV right now is because Rainbow Randolph is a degenerate scumbag. I didn't discover you, I delivered you. Like a bag of groceries. I have a bigger emotional investment in my nail polish. So don't peddle your sap to me, rhino. Your job is just to smile and nod your head.

She walks off.

INT. PATSY'S - NIGHT

Sheldon sits at the bar in the restaurant, nursing a drink and talking to the BARTENDER. He seems slightly drunk.

SHELDON

... No, no, you misunderstand me. It's not that I'm literally comparing Captain Kangaroo to Jesus Christ. I'm just saying that the Captain, like Christ, was someone you could believe in. Those guys didn't care about bells and whistles and rickita-rackata. It was all about the work. Especially Jesus. Forget about it.

The Bartender nods and starts to pour Sheldon another drink.

SHELDON

(waving him off)
That's okay, my good man. Three's my limit.

BARTENDER

I never saw anyone get loaded on orange juice before.

SHELDON

Back in my college days I could put away a carton of the stuff.

A sharply-dressed man, BURKE BENNETT, sits down next to Sheldon.

BURKE

(to Bartender)
Gimme a Five Crown.

The Bartender nods. He looks over at Sheldon.

BURKE

Smoochy the Rhino. Wow. I'm a big fan.

SHELDON

(flattered)
Gee, thanks. I usually don't get recognized without my horn.

Burke extends his hand.

BURKE

Burke Bennett. I represent kid show talent.

INT. PATSY'S - SHORT WHILE LATER

Sheldon and Burke now sit at a corner table.

BURKE

Look, Shel, Frank Stokes ain't in the business to make you rich. He's in it to make Frank Stokes rich. That's how these network goons operate.

SHELDON

That's so sad. Is it just me, or is that sad?

BURKE

You know, years ago, a client of mine, Dicky Gimble, was having a problem...

SHELDON

Wow, you represented Dicky Gimble?

BURKE

Yeah, before the asshole found religion. Anyway, Stokes was trying to screw my boy out of some merchandising points. Claimed he had a warehouse full of Dicky dolls that weren't moving. Now Frank and I are old friends, so I say to him, 'Okay, cock, show me the warehouse' -- see, I know the fucking warehouse is in the Bronx, and I know it's emptier than my wife's head.

(chuckles)

To make a long story short, I walk out with a check for a hundred grand and Stokes is sitting there with his thumb up his ass.

Burke laughs.

SHELDON

That's very amusing, but I don't care about Smoochy dolls and Smoochy floor wax... I just want more creative input. This rhino came from my womb. I bore him, I nursed him, and dammit...

He pounds his fist on the table.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

SHELDON

I should be the one who raises him!

BURKE

Shel, it's all about the dough. After you get the money, you get the power. And after you get the power, you can have Smoochy walk on stage with a hard-on if you want.

SHELDON

It's funny, that never crossed my mind.

Burke downs the rest of his drink and stands up.

BURKE

Unfortunately, until then... you're just another puppet in the prop room.

He hands Sheldon his card.

BURKE

Give me a call when you're ready, kid. I'll cut the strings and open the magic door for you.

EXT. PATSY'S - CONTINUOUS ACTION

Randolph peers through the restaurant's front window. He shivers from the cold as he watches Sheldon and Burke shake hands. Burke heads for the exit. Randolph quickly ducks into the shadows. A moment later, Burke exits the club and walks down the street. Randolph pops out.

RANDOLPH

I saw you! I saw you in there... at my table... talking to him.

BURKE

Yeah, so what do you want? A parade?

RANDOLPH

You're my agent! Or did you forget that?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

BURKE

Not anymore, pal. You're a cigarette butt. Go lay in the gutter.

Burke walks off.

EXT. ALLEY - NIGHT

In the litter-strewn alley, we PAN ACROSS several grocery bags, broken egg shells, flour bags, butter wrappers, mixing bowls and other baking ingredients. The PAN ENDS ON Randolph, who stands over a barrel fire, holding a spatula. A cookie sheet rests on the barrel. Randolph removes the cookie sheet and gazes at it gleefully. We now see that the cookies are phallic-shaped.

RANDOLPH

Ah! They're beautiful! A perfect batch of cock cookies for a very special rhino.

He sets the tray aside.

RANDOLPH

Oh yes, you're going to learn about shame, my dear Smoochy. And I'm your professor.

He laughs.

INT. KIDNET STUDIO - STAGE B - DAY

It's thirty minutes before a Smoochy taping. Dozens of giddy children are led into the studio where they take seats on the bleachers.

BACKSTAGE

Sheldon, in the Smoochy costume, sans head, lumbers up to Nora. He holds a rundown for that day's show.

SHELDON

Excuse me, Nora. Why was the 'Please and Thank You Song' cut?

NORA

Because it's sappy and it takes away from the 'Cookie Song.'

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

SHELDON

Takes away? It enhances it! The cookie song is a meaningless piece of fluff without the 'Please and Thank You' coda! That's the moral anchor! That's where the lesson is! You can't sell the sizzle without the steak!

NORA

It's cut. And I want the 'Cookie Song' lyrics changed back to the way they were originally scripted.

SHELDON

I can't do that. I will not condone children consuming endless amounts of refined sugar. I have to look myself in the mirror every morning.

NORA

This is network television, not a sprout farm. We're here to sell sugar and plastic. That's what keeps the lights on.

SHELDON

You're treating me like a puppet. You know that? Well, guess what? I am not your puppet.

NORA

Since when? Now get your spongy orange ass out there and dance for the cameras.

An angry Sheldon storms off in frustration, but then stops. He looks back at her.

SHELDON

We have different eyes, Nora. When I go out there I see kids. You see wallets with pigtails.

He moves on. Nora stares at him as he walks away. He obviously got to her. As Sheldon heads toward the studio, he doesn't notice the two beady eyes staring at him from under the stairwell. After a beat, Randolph emerges and slinks backstage. He's clutching a duffle bag.

INT. PROP ROOM - CONTINUOUS ACTION

Randolph sneaks into the prop room and shuts the door. He scurries over to the prop shelf and locates Smoochy's multicolored "magic cookie bag." He opens it and tosses the cookies into the trash can. Reaching into his pockets, he pulls out his special homemade cookies. He chuckles as he dumps them into the magic cookie bag.

RANDOLPH

Bon soir, la Smoochy. Welcome to fatty Arbuckle-land.

He cackles to himself. He then notices a box in the corner of the room. Scribbled in magic marker on the side are the words: "Rainbow Randolph crap." He walks over and pulls the box out. He slowly opens the flaps. Inside is his old costume. He pulls it out and clutches it lovingly. He smells it. The ECHOEY SOUND of his THEME SONG comes flooding back to him for a moment, along with the sound of CHILDREN LAUGHING.

RANDOLPH

(softly to himself)

Don't worry, little ones. Rainbow Randolph will return...

(with rising anger)

After these messages!

He holds up Smoochy's magic cookie bag. He then stuffs his old costume into his duffle bag.

INT. STUDIO B - LATER

The "Smoochy Show" is in the middle of a taping. The Smoochyland Band is playing a fast, jazzy number ("Doin' the Jiggy Ziggy") as Smoochy, the Rhinettes, and several kids dance frenetically. The kids in the bleachers are in hysterics as Smoochy shakes his body spastically. The song finally ends. The kids in the bleachers jump to their feet, cheering and applauding.

SMOOCHY

Boy, all that jiggyin' and ziggyin' sure makes a fella hungry! Now if only I had my super duper, super secret, super special...

The kids in the bleachers erupt in unison:

KIDS

Magic Cookie Bag!

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

SMOOCHY
 Right-o-riffic!
 (looks skyward)
 Magic Cookie Bag, I command thee!
 Come to your lord and master!

The lights dim as the Smoochyland Band plays the "2001 theme." Smoochy's Magic Cookie Bag is lowered from the ceiling by a filament wire. The kids go crazy.

SMOOCHY
 (singing)
 'Lookie, lookie, lookie, here
 comes the cookies! Fresh and
 organic, no need to panic! Right
 from the soil, no tropical oils!
 Sweetened with juice, for an
 energy boost! Fiber galore,
 you'll be askin' for more...'

ANGLE ON NORA

She looks pissed, but then looks over at the kids in the bleachers. Their faces are filled with laughter. For the first time she feels the connection Smoochy has with them.

ANGLE ON RANDOLPH

He peers out from his hiding place backstage. His eyes widen with delight as the Magic Cookie Bag continues its descent.

ANGLE ON SMOOCHY

The cookie bag finally reaches Smoochy. He holds the bag high above his head in a religious ceremonial fashion as the Rhinettes and the kids crowd around him.

SMOOCHY
 Oooh... just the smell of
 unprocessed flour makes my tummy
 do somersaults!

ANGLE ON RANDOLPH

RANDOLPH
 (under his breath)
 Whatever that means, you fucking
 retard.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

SMOOCHY

His puffy orange hand reaches for the bag's clasp as the MUSIC reaches its CRESCENDO.

RANDOLPH

He's practically shaking as he suppresses an insane laugh.

RANDOLPH

Give 'em a cookie... give 'em a cookie...

SMOOCHY

He reaches into the bag, and with a grand flourish, pulls out a flaming red penis cookie. The cookie is somewhat misshapen and not perfectly formed. Smoochy gets a big grin.

SMOOCHY

Wow! Look at this cookie, kids!
A rocket ship!

The kids "ooh" and "ahh."

ANGLE ON RANDOLPH

He looks confused.

SHELDON

What a special day with such special cookies!

BACK ON SMOOCHY

Smoochy pretends to "zoom" the penis cookie through the air.

SHELDON

Rrrrrrrr! Look at me, kids! I'm flying to the moon! I'm flying to Mars! I'm flying to --

Randolph, whose face is now bright red, can't take it anymore. He runs onto the stage. He grabs the rocket cookie from Smoochy.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

RANDOLPH
 Are you fucking blind?! It's a
 cock! Not a space ship! Cock!
 Cock!

INT. STAIRWELL - MOMENTS LATER

Three burly Kidnet security guards drag Randolph down the stairwell. They beat the shit out of him and toss him through the exit door.

INT. FRANK STOKES' OFFICE - TIGHT ON NEW YORK POST FRONT PAGE - DAY

The headline reads: "Rainbow Randolph Interrupts Smoochy Taping." The subhead reads: "Runs Onstage Shouting Penis Related Obscenities."

WIDE

Burke sits on the couch next to Sheldon, reading the paper. He shakes his head in disgust. Nora sits in a chair near Stokes.

SHELDON
 Thank you all for coming. I just wanted to iron out a few wrinkles I feel we're having in the communication department. No finger-pointing. Lord knows when you start pointing fingers, someone gets poked in the eye.

Sheldon laughs. Stokes and Nora sit stone-faced.

SHELDON
 Anyhoo, I'd like to turn the floor over to my new agent, Mr. Burke Bennett. So... heeeeeere's Burke!

Sheldon applauds. Burke stands.

BURKE
 As you can imagine, my client has many concerns, not the least of which is studio security, but we can address that later.

He pats Sheldon's head like a dog.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

BURKE

See this guy, Frank? Take a good long look, 'cause this prick saved your life. Without him you'd be sitting in Kaplan's right now, sucking club soda through a paper straw.

(to Nora)

And, you -- you'd be organizing puppet shows for the brats at P.S. 86. Excuse me, honey.

NORA

There's no excuse for you.

SHELDON

Man, I love club soda.

Sheldon laughs, trying to lighten the mood. Burke gives him an affectionate slap.

STOKES

We've always managed to come to some sort of arrangement, Burke. Why the fireworks?

BURKE

'Cause I'm holding all the gunpowder. I represent the man who created, owns, and controls every square inch of Smoochy the Rhino.

Burke pours himself a drink from Stokes' private bar.

BURKE

God created Adam and what did he get? A fucking dud. My guy? He breathed life into a winner. And anyone who does a better job than God is gonna have a price.

SHELDON

Burke, of course, is in no way comparing me to God.

BURKE

Yes I am.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

NORA

You seem to forget that we went out and found 'your guy.' Dug up his corpse. Handed him his own show when he couldn't sell his face to a photo booth.

SHELDON

To be fair, Nora, I was booked to open a car wash in Montauk.

BURKE

Oh, so you were doing him a favor?
(chuckles)

Allow me to untangle this web of shit! I don't care what his resume was, I don't care where you found him, I don't care if his last job was juggling apples for a hut full of Pygmies on the outskirts of the Congo... the fact is, he fits a bill and you need him. Like a hungry baby needs a big tit. And that, my friends, is why you're in a box with no ventilation. And that is why the rhino is going to get what he deserves.

STOKES

What is that, exactly?

Burke walks over to Stokes' desk and leans across it. He's an inch from Stokes' face.

BURKE

Heaven, hell, and everything in between.

INT. SPINNER DUNN'S RESTAURANT - CLOSE ON CHAMPAGNE CORK - EVENING

being popped as foamy champagne runs down the bottle.

WIDE

Sheldon and Burke sit at a table in the nightclub. Burke raises his glass.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

BURKE

To the star and new executive producer of the Smoochy show! May your reign be a long and healthy one!

They clink glasses.

SHELDON

I'm still in shock. Complete creative control, part ownership of the show, discretion over merchandising and a dressing room with a toilet! Am I dreaming or what?

BURKE

And don't forget the corporate penthouse. It took me six years to get that for Randolph.

SHELDON

Boy, imagine... me, living in a penthouse. Who'd a thunk it.

BURKE

It's called the high life, kid. Get used to it. Pretty soon you'll be burnin' one hundred dollar bills just to see Franklin break a sweat.

SHELDON

Jeez, I hope not. I have a deep respect for money. Not to mention Ben Franklin who had some remarkable achievements in his lifetime.

Burke pulls out a paper bag and hands it to Sheldon.

SHELDON

What's this?

BURKE

That's your graduation present. Something you're gonna need now.

Sheldon reaches in the bag and pulls out a revolver. He recoils in horror and immediately drops it back in the bag.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

BURKE

Think of it as a tool of the trade.

SHELDON

I've never owned a gun, I've never touched a gun, and I don't believe in guns. When I played cowboys and Indians as a kid, I was always the Chinese railroad worker.

BURKE

Trust me, Shel. It's a handy accessory in this business. Even if you don't load it, have it for show. Sometimes that's all you need. Especially with a creep like Randolph lurking around.

Burke and Sheldon look up and notice the hulking, grinning figure of SPINNER DUNN standing over them. Spinner has the smile of a little boy despite his crooked nose and scarred face. He extends his hand.

SPINNER

Hiya, Smoochy! I'm Spinner! Spinner!

SHELDON

Hi there.

SPINNER

I'm so excited to meet you! I'm Spinner!

Spinner's massive hand engulfs Sheldon's.

SHELDON

(remembers)

Oh... right. I saw you fight on TV once. I think it was your farewell bout.

SWISH PAN TO:

FLASHBACK - INT. BOXING RING(S) - SOMETIME IN THE PAST

Through a SERIES OF CUTS we see Spinner getting pummeled in various fights.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

RINGSIDE COMMENTATOR #1

Tonight marks Spinner Dunn's final appearance in the ring. What a pleasure it's been to watch him proudly march into the record books for taking more blows to the head than any fighter in history.

A bloodied, defeated Spinner happily holds up the arm of his opponent after a match. He then hugs the referee. He jumps down from the ring and hugs the three judges.

RINGSIDE COMMENTATOR #2

Scrambled a bit? Sure. You don't retire with a record of 81-59 and wind up the Governor. But on the upside, he's got the disposition of a collie.

Spinner wades into the stands and starts hugging the spectators.

SWISH PAN TO:

INT. SPINNER DUNN'S RESTAURANT (PRESENT)

Spinner is still pumping Sheldon's hand.

SPINNER

You know what I love, Smoochy? I love when you do the Jiggy Ziggy dance! You know, the one you do during 'Silly Time?'

SHELDON

You bet. That's a big one.

SPINNER

Wanna see me do it?

SHELDON

Well, I don't know why if there's enough room here to...

Spinner starts Jiggying and Ziggying for Sheldon. He bangs into a table and knocks over someone's drink.

BURKE

Okay, champ, don't get overheated.

Spinner stops, out of breath. He leans over and hugs Sheldon.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

SPINNER

I love you.

SHELDON

I... uh... love you, too, Spinner.

A powerful-looking woman, TOMMY COTTER, calls to Spinner from the bar.

TOMMY

Spinner, come over and meet the Senator!

Spinner dutifully hurries over to Tommy.

SHELDON

He seems pretty popular. It must take real talent to run a place like this.

BURKE

Spinner? The guy couldn't run a water faucet. He's just a mascot. It's his cousins, a bunch of Irish mob boys, who really run the joint.

ANGLE ON SPINNER

He shakes the Senator's hand as Tommy and a few other tough Irish guys stand around. Spinner looks over towards Sheldon.

SPINNER

(loudly)

Don't go anywhere, Smoochy! I'll be right back after I take a dump!

Spinner releases the Senator's hand and rushes off.

BURKE

I think you made a new friend, kid.

INT. ANGELO PIKE'S RUNDOWN APARTMENT
(LOWER EAST SIDE) - NIGHT

We met him backstage with Smoochy... innocent face...

Angelo stirs a pot of soup in the worn-down but tidy apartment. A "Rhinette" costume is draped over one of the chairs. There is a sudden LOUD POUNDING on the door. Angelo puts the spoon down and reaches behind some spices on the shelf above. He pulls out a revolver. The POUNDING continues.

ANGELO
Yeah, who is it?

RANDOLPH (O.S.)
(friendly)
Open up, buddy! It's me,
Randolph! It's been a long time!

Angelo puts the gun in his waistband and walks to the door. He slowly slides the chain off and opens the door a crack. Peering in at him are the bloodshot eyes of Rainbow Randolph.

ANGELO
Randy?

Randolph suddenly kicks the door open and tackles Angelo. Randolph sits on top of the little man.

RANDOLPH
You fucking traitor! My body's
barely cold and already you work
for the rhino?

ANGELO
I don't know what you're talking
about.

RANDOLPH
Don't lie to me! I heard all about
it! You strapped that horn on
faster than a cheerleader gets the
clap!

ANGELO
I gotta eat, don't I?

RANDOLPH
You're a Krinkle Kid! Not a
Smooch-bag! Say it!

ANGELO
Rhinette!

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

RANDOLPH

Say it: I am a Krinkle Kid! Say
it, before God! On the soul of
Jesus Christ! Say what you are!

Angelo punches Randolph in the mouth and flips him over.
He now sits on Randolph, pointing the revolver to his face.

ANGELO

I'm a Rhinette. Got that? The
Krinkle Kids are ten feet under.
With you.

Randolph starts crying like a child.

RANDOLPH

(blubbering)
I missed you so much. Can I stay
here? I got no place to go.

Angelo sighs and puts the gun away.

INT. ANGELO'S APARTMENT - SHORT WHILE LATER

Angelo and Randolph sit at the small kitchen table.
Angelo watches as Randolph ravenously eats a bowl of
soup.

RANDOLPH

... They kicked me out of the
corporate penthouse. Big
surprise. Sons-a-bitches. That's
how I got this beauty.

He points to a nasty bump near his eye.

RANDOLPH

And of course, there's this...

He yanks his lip back to reveal a missing tooth.

RANDOLPH

That happened after my little
visit to the studio the other day.
Network security. Fucking savages.

He slurps another spoonful of soup and spits a bay leaf
on the floor.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

RANDOLPH

I got liens, back taxes, lawyer's bills, threats against my life... I basically got the whole fucking world up my ass. It's okay, I got a loooong memory, son.

(Amos and Andy dialect)

What dey sow, dey gonna reap.

He cackles insanely as he picks up a bottle of gin and takes a deep swig. He passes out and falls off the chair. Angelo leans down and lifts his head off the floor.

ANGELO

Stop doing this to yourself!

Randolph doesn't respond. Angelo slaps his face.

ANGELO

Wise up! You hear me? Don't piss your life away like this.

RANDOLPH

(half-conscious)

It's the rhino, Angie. He's been sent by the devil. Sent from hell to destroy me. Smoochy... is the face of evil.

EXT. BROADWAY (TIMES SQUARE) - MORNING

We are ON the smiling goofy face of Sheldon, whose picture graces the front page of Variety under the headline, "MOPES TO EXECUTIVE PRODUCE SMOOCHY SHOW." The subhead reads, "TENURE TO BEGIN TODAY." A dollar bill is slapped down over the picture.

We WIDEN OUT to see Sheldon buying the magazine at the newsstand in front of the Kidnet Building. He turns and walks toward the Kidnet entrance. He stops and looks up at the building. Smiling, he takes a deep breath and enters.

INT. KIDNET HALLWAY - FEW MOMENTS LATER

Sheldon whistles as he walks down the hall, giving cheerful "hellos" and "good mornings" along the way. He enters Nora's office.

INT. NORA'S OFFICE - CONTINUOUS ACTION

Nora is on the phone. She pretends not to notice him. Sheldon bides his time by inspecting knickknacks, examining photos on the wall, etc. Finally, he half-whispers/half-mouths to her:

SHELDON

Whenever you get a chance... I just need a second.

NORA

(into the phone)
Listen, can I call you back?
Yeah, some asshole's screaming in my ear. Thanks.

She hangs up.

SHELDON

I'm sorry, you didn't have to hang up.

NORA

If I didn't you'd still be here.

SHELDON

But I am still here.

NORA

I'm hoping to correct that.

SHELDON

Nora, I want us to start off on the right foot. I want you to know that I value your input and I don't want you to feel intimidated just because the power structure has changed a bit. I consider you a partner.

NORA

Great. That'll come in handy if we're ever at a square dance.

SHELDON

Well, I was never much of the do-se-do type, but what I would love to do is take you out to lunch one day. You know, just two colleagues chewing the fat... forming a mutual respect... planting the seeds of cooperation...

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

NORA

No.

SHELDON

Fair enough. If you change your mind --

NORA

I won't.

Sheldon just nods and starts to exit.

SHELDON

Okay then, I'll be in my office if you need me. If you want to brainstorm about anything. Ideas and so forth.

He passes a plant by the door.

SHELDON

Ficus?

She ignores him. He exits.

INT. HALLWAY - CONTINUOUS ACTION

Sheldon walks slowly down the hallway. He no longer has a bounce in his step.

INT. SHELDON'S NEW OFFICE - MOMENT LATER

Sheldon enters his plush new office, awkwardly walks over to his new desk and sits behind it for the first time.

SHELDON

Wow...

TOMMY (O.S.)

My cousin Spinner's take quite a shine to you.

Sheldon jumps. He's surprised to Tommy from Spinner Dunn's restaurant. Tommy's crew, ROY, DANNY, JIMMY and SAMMY occupy the sofa.

TOMMY

Ever since you came in the restaurant. He can't stop yakkin'.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

SHELDON

Well, he's a very nice man. Very sweet disposition for someone that size.

TOMMY

So, I was wondering if maybe you could give him a little floor space.

SHELDON

I'm sorry?

TOMMY

You know, a little part on the show. You're the executive producer now. You call the shots, right?

SHELDON

Uh, that's a very sweet offer, and I love Spinner, but TV is a complicated medium and... I mean, that would be like me getting into the ring with a prizefighter.

(laughs)

Can you imagine such a thing? Boom. K.O.! What's the alphabet, Mommy?

Sheldon laughs again. Tommy gets quiet.

TOMMY

This makes me sad. Very, very, sad.

DANNY

What's wrong, Tommy?

TOMMY

Nothing. I'm just very sad right now.

SAMMY

Who made you sad, Tommy?

TOMMY

I don't want to mention names.

The guys look menacingly at Sheldon. They rise and walk around his desk until they're on either side of him.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

SHELDON

You know what? Maybe I can find Spinner a little something to do on the show. That's probably the best solution.

Tommy now smiles and walks over to Sheldon. She musses Sheldon's hair.

TOMMY

You're a good boy, Mopes. Don't think we don't remember favors.

SWISH PAN TO:

INT. SHELDON'S OFFICE - SHORT WHILE LATER

Sheldon is in a meeting with a man, SONNY GORDON.

SHELDON

Look, I appreciate the visit, but I'm just putting together a little petting zoo segment. Nothing fancy -- a few kittens... maybe a duck...

ANGLE ON SONNY

SUPERIMPOSE: SONNY GORDON, PRESIDENT, ANIMAL WRANGLERS ' LOCAL 358

SONNY

If you're looking to bring in that many pieces I gotta put a crew together. Plus, we're lookin' at transpo, a few leash handlers, a cleanup boy and a dooper to keep the inventory quiet.

SHELDON

Jeez, this all sounds awfully elaborate. I might have to forgo the union and just borrow a few animals from a pet shop.

SONNY

I wouldn't recommend it. Miss Carol from Romper Room tried that once and she's still limping.

SWISH PAN TO --

INT. SHELDON'S OFFICE - SHORT TIME LATER

A frazzled-looking Sheldon is meeting with BEN FRANKS.

BEN

On behalf of FunZone Toys, I'd like to congratulate you on your recent promotion, and present you with a small gift.

SUPERIMPOSE: BEN FRANKS, V.P., FUNZONE TOYS

Ben reaches into his breast pocket and drops a large wad of money on Sheldon's desk that lands with a thud.

SHELDON

Uh... that's nice of you, Ben, but a card would have been fine.

BEN

FunZone Toys would very much like the Smoochy contract, Mr. Mopes.

SHELDON

Is this... I mean... are you offering me a bribe or something?

BEN

FunZone Toys would very much like the Smoochy contract, Mr. Mopes.

Sheldon picks up the money and tosses it back to Ben. Sheldon rises from his desk.

SHELDON

Normally, sir, we take the trash out at the end of the day, but I think I'll make an exception in your case.

Sheldon escorts Ben out the door and slams it shut. The PHONE RINGS. Sheldon walks over and picks it up.

SHELDON

Yes?

ASSISTANT (V.O.)

A Mr. Feedlepepper on line two.

SHELDON

Who?

ASSISTANT (V.O.)

He says he's an old friend.

Sheldon punches line two.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

SHELDON

Hello?

INTERCUT:

INT. ANGELO'S APARTMENT - RANDOLPH

RANDOLPH (V.O.)

You better grow eyes on the back
of your fucking head, you horned
piece of shit! I won't sleep
until the worms are crawlin' up
your foam rubber ass! I'm going
on safari, motherfucker... safari!

Sheldon hangs up stunned. Nora walks in holding the daily news.

NORA

Congratulations on your little ice
show.

SHELDON

What are you talking about?

NORA

It didn't take you long to sell out,
did it?

She tosses the paper on his desk.

NORA

What happened to your precious
integrity? Or was that just part
of your dog and pony act.

She exits. A confused Sheldon looks at the "Around Town" column.

INSERT - HEADLINE

"GARDEN TO HOST SMOOCHY ON ICE." The subhead reads:

"HUGE GATE EXPECTED -- VENDORS SALIVATE AT SMELL OF BIG
BUCKS."

CUT TO:

INT. SPINNER DUNN'S - EVENING

We are TIGHT ON the feet of an Irish dancer doing a sort of Riverdance. We WIDEN OUT and the rest of the dancers come INTO FRAME. Spinner and the mob are clapping and whooping.

Sheldon and Burke sit at a table in the dark club having a conversation.

SHELDON

Burke, I never agreed to do an ice show.

BURKE

Shel, do you know what kind of cash we'll take in between the gate and concessions? A venture like this gets you money and muscle. Times twenty.

SHELDON

Ice shows represent everything I'm against. They're mindless spectacles whose main purpose is to sell overpriced sugar-water and cheap plastic toys that splinter in a kid's mouth on the ride home.

BURKE

Look, I know you got this fetish for ethics, but now's not the time to fly that kite. No one's ever refused a shot at an ice show.

Sheldon tears the contract in half.

SHELDON

Until now. Smoochy doesn't sell out, Burke. You should be proud of that. Proud that you represent a client who paves driveways, not paints them over.

BURKE

I'm thrilled, Shel. Knocked out.

Burke just sits there, stunned. A waitress, SANDY, passes by the booth.

SHELDON

I'll have a pineapple juice, Sandy.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

SANDY

Pineapple? What happened to
orange juice?

SHELDON

I'm feeling feisty tonight.

INT. TELEVISION STUDIO - DAY

We are now on a drum solo. Ernie the Elephant of the Smoochyland Band works it. The animal band plays a sloppy version of "Pop Goes the Weasel." End on Spinner Dunn -- the newest and by far largest member of the band. Spinner holds a cowbell and seems to be concentrating intently on the proper moment to hit it. Unfortunately, his rhythm is off, which throws the rest of the band off as well.

We WIDEN OUT to see Smoochy and the Rhinettes attempting to dance to the off-kilter rhythm. The song finally ends. The Rhinettes glare at Spinner. Smoochy addresses the camera.

SMOOCHY

Boy, wasn't that fun? In an awkward kind of way? Anyhoo, how 'bout a big round of applause for the newest member of the Smoochyland Band... former heavyweight contender, Spinner Dunn!

Spinner stands up to take a bow and almost knocks the entire bandstand over. There is a smattering of confused applause from the kids in the bleachers. Spinner drops the cowbell and it clangs on the studio floor.

SPINNER

Shit. Sorry.

INT. BACKSTAGE - AFTER SHOW

A beaming Spinner runs up to Sheldon, who's still in costume.

SPINNER

Did I do good, Sheldon, huh? Did I do good?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

SHELDON

Yeah, that was great, Spinner.
Just watch your elbow next time.
Pinky's probably gonna lose that
tooth.

SPINNER

Okey doke. I'm gonna go get drunk
now.

Spinner skips off humming "Pop Goes the Weasel" and
banging his cowbell. Nora passes Sheldon backstage.

NORA

Nice job. Casting the show with
mental patients, I like that.

SHELDON

(snapping)

He is not a mental patient. He's
an ex-boxer and nightclub owner
who happens to have the sweet
innocent brian of a five-year-old!

NORA

Excuse me for not making the
distinction.

She leaves.

EXT. BROADWAY (TIMES SQUARE) - NIGHT

Sheldon exits the Kidnet building and walks to the curb
to hail a cab. A friendly-looking man in a suit and bow
tie approaches him. This is MERV GREEN.

MERV

Hi there.

SHELDON

Hi.

A limo pulls up in front of them. Merv opens the back
door.

MERV

Get in.

SHELDON

Thanks anyway, but I'm going
uptown.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Merv pulls his jacket back to reveal a revolver tucked in his waistband.

MERV
Humor me, rhino.

INT. LIMOUSINE - CONTINUOUS ACTION

Sheldon slides into the back seat of the limo. A big thug in an overcoat, HENRY, is already sitting there. Merv gets in behind him and shuts the door. Sheldon is now wedged between the two men as the limo heads down Broadway. Merv extends his hand.

MERV
Merv Green, Sheldon. It's a pleasure to meet you.

SHELDON
If you're hoping for an autograph, the gun's a bit much. The whole 'catch more flies with honey' thing -- it really holds water.

Sheldon laughs nervously.

MERV
Sheldon, I represent the Parade of Hope Foundation. Maybe you've heard of us.

SHELDON
You raise money to build children's hospitals, right?

MERV
We've been known to add a brick or two, sure.

Merv and the thug laugh.

MERV
Sheldon, let me get right to the point -- there's talk on the street that you're pulling out of the ice show. Is that true?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

SHELDON

(big sigh)

You know, I never agreed to an ice show, nor would I ever agree to do an ice show, and let me add that none of this is your concern, sir.

(shakes his head)

Sheesh.

MERV

Listen carefully, son: Parade of Hope has sponsored every Kidnet ice show since 1964. We take a piece off the top and everybody walks away happy. So let's not buck history.

SHELDON

Well, I appreciate the offer, but for the gazillionth time, I'm not doing an ice show, so we have nothing to discuss. Now, if you'll just pull over, I'll get out and we'll say our toodley-dos.

(to driver)

Far corner, please.

MERV

Allow me to be less murky. Starting tomorrow, Smoochy the Rhino raises his baton for Parade of Hope. Benefits, banquets, fund-raisers, I want it all.

(to driver)

Pull over, Terry.

The car pulls to the curb.

MERV

And as far as the ice show goes... I recommend you start shopping for skates.

The door pops open and Sheldon is tossed out.

INT. CORPORATE PENTHOUSE - NIGHT

A troubled-looking Sheldon stands on his balcony looking out at the city. He drinks orange juice straight from the carton.

Sheldon is on the phone with Burke.

SHELDON

This is unacceptable, Burke! I'm calling the authorities.

BURKE (V.O.)

Don't do it, Shel. You rat on Parade of Hope and you'll be lucky if they find your toenails. These guys are the roughest of all the charities.

SHELDON

I was threatened by an organization that's supposed to help children! What kind of world is this?

BURKE (V.O.)

The real one. My advice? Consider the ice show and stay healthy.

Burke hangs up. After a beat, Sheldon's DOORBELL RINGS. He walks over to the door and opens it. To his surprise, Nora is standing there.

NORA

May I come in?

SHELDON

Sure.

Nora enters. She seems a little wobbly. Sheldon notices she's holding a pint of whiskey.

SHELDON

Uh... are you okay?

NORA

I'm getting drunk and I'm not used to it.

SHELDON

Oh. Well, not to make you feel worse, but with alcohol you're also consuming empty calories.

Nora looks at him for a moment.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

NORA

It's just that... I want to apologize, actually. And on those rare occasions when I feel the need to apologize for something, it helps if I'm, you know... shit-faced.

SHELDON

Wow. I'm honored.

Nora trips slightly. Sheldon takes the whiskey from her.

SHELDON

Why don't we get some air?

He leads her out on the balcony. They look out at the city.

NORA

I... I may have been a little harsh when we spoke the other day. A little out of line.

SHELDON

Well, it wasn't as bad as the week before when you called me a pasty-faced, no-talent hack.

NORA

Yes, that was probably insensitive as well.

(looks at him)

I heard you're not doing the ice show. I find that... incredibly admirable. Why didn't you tell me?

SHELDON

I guess I didn't want to spoil your fun. You look so content when you're berating me.

Nora looks down.

NORA

I'm afraid I have become a bit hardened over the years. Sincerity's an easy disguise in this business. It's hard to know who's on the level.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

SHELDON

Believe me, I'm learning that more and more every day.

(wistfully)

'Sometimes light is really dark,
Sometimes crows can sing like
larks
Sometimes Winter feels like
Spring,
Don't think you know everything.'

NORA

(in disbelief)

'Rickets the Hippo'?

SHELDON

You remember Rickets?

NORA

That was my favorite show when I was a kid. Rickets was the one face I knew I could trust.

SHELDON

That's how I felt! Rickets had real depth. He was my inspiration for Smoochy.

NORA

Really? He was my inspiration to work in children's television.

SHELDON

I can't believe it. I never met anyone who even remembers Rickets. Do you remember the Klunky-Wunky dance?

NORA

Remember it? I did it at my first communion.

Sheldon starts doing the rather insane-looking Klunky-Wunky dance. Nora does it with him. They both stop and look at each other. Sheldon impulsively leans in and kisses her.

SHELDON

I'm sorry. That was a mistake, right? I didn't mean for that to hap--

Nora grabs his head and pulls it toward her. They begin kissing passionately.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

NORA
(as they kiss)
You're not full of shit like all
the others, are you?

SHELDON
No, no.

NORA
(as they kiss)
You're for real, right?

SHELDON
Yes, yes.

NORA
(through the kisses)
I mean, I couldn't tell... First I
thought it was an act... and then
I just thought you were a simp or
something...

SHELDON
Shhh... you don't have to
explain...

They continue to kiss. Nora abruptly stops.

NORA
I should go.

SHELDON
Why?

Nora exits the balcony and collects her coat and purse.

SHELDON
What's wrong? Is it the whiskey?
If you have to throw up, be my
guest. Anywhere you like.

NORA
It's just getting late.

Sheldon follows her to the door. She stops and looks at him for a moment. The PHONE starts to RING. Neither of them says anything for a beat.

NORA
Better get that. Good night.

She exits. Sheldon shuts the door and sighs. He goes to the bar to pour himself another orange juice before picking up the phone.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

SHELDON

Hello?

ANGELO'S APARTMENT

We GO TO a HORIZONTAL SPLIT-SCREEN. Randolph is on the BOTTOM HALF. He lies on his bed in Angelo's apartment wearing a bathrobe with a towel wrapped around his head. His head dangles off the bed as he talks on the phone. The SHOT is reminiscent of Bye Bye Birdie.

RANDOLPH

Hello, Mr. Mopes? My name is Benjamin Kunklepeck and I'm calling on behalf of 'Parents for Decency in Children's Television,' perhaps you've heard of us?

SHELDON

No, but I like where you're coming from. It's an issue very close to my heart. Why just yesterday I was commenting --

RANDOLPH

Sir, we're having a banquet tomorrow and we'd be honored to have you perform for us. We would also like to present you with a plaque for your ongoing commitment to children's television. The presenter will be a young orphan with mild asthma. Can you attend?

EXT. VERRAZANO NARROWS BRIDGE - NEXT MORNING

A black Lincoln Town Car travels across the bridge toward Staten Island.

SHELDON (V.O.)

Thanks for picking me up, Mr. Kunklepeck. It's very nice of you.

INT. TOWN CAR - CONTINUOUS ACTION

Sheldon is in the back seat. The Smoochy costume is next to him. Behind the wheel is Randolph. He's in disguise.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

RANDOLPH

Don't be silly. The chance to have Smoochy the Rhino perform at our little soiree? I'd carry you piggy-back through a bed of hot rusty glass if I had to.

SHELDON

Well, it's always a pleasure to help out a worthy cause. And believe me, I've learned lately that it's not all sunshine and daffodils in the land of non-profit.

RANDOLPH

I just looove your show, by the way. It's such a refreshing change of pace from that dreadful embezzler... what's his name again? Rainbow something or other?

SHELDON

Randolph.

RANDOLPH

Yes. Rainbow Randolph. What a scoundrel! He's probably gay too.

SHELDON

Oh, I don't know. I feel sorry for him, actually. He obviously has problems or issues that he needs to sort out.

RANDOLPH

(getting frustrated)

Yeah, yeah, yeah, but don't you take particular glee in that you basically stole his time slot? Helped shovel dirt onto his miserable corpse, as it were?

SHELDON

No, I would never take pleasure in someone's downfall. You know the old expression about walking a mile in another man's shoes? Well, that really holds water. Just try to imagine --

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

RANDOLPH
 (snapping)
 Come on, he's a fucking asshole!
 You hate him! Admit it!

SHELDON
 (uncomfortable)
 Uh... can we listen to the radio?

EXT. WAREHOUSE - SHORT WHILE LATER

The Town Car is parked behind an old warehouse in the middle of nowhere. Sheldon is now in costume. Randolph rushes out of the door, very excited.

RANDOLPH
 Okay, they're ready for you!

SHELDON
 I gotta say, this is a first -- I never performed in a tractor parts warehouse before.

RANDOLPH
 Well, we like to do these things no-frills. It's all about the kids.

SHELDON
 Amen to that.

Randolph opens the door a crack and listens. We hear an O.S. VOICE from inside.

VOICE (O.S.)
 It gives me great pleasure to introduce our very special guest... a supporter of the cause and a friend to the brotherhood. Please welcome, the one, the only... Smoochy the Rhino!

We hear APPLAUSE. Randolph quickly opens the rusty door.

RANDOLPH
 Knock 'em dead, kid!

He shoves Sheldon inside.

INT. WAREHOUSE - CONTINUOUS ACTION

Sheldon runs in and immediately starts singing and dancing on the makeshift stage.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

SMOOCHY

'Well, how-do-you-do, my good
friends! How do-you-do, my pals!
It's so nice to see good friends!
Sing along with me now! How do
you do, my good -- '

Sheldon abruptly stops singing as a look of shock comes over him. PUSH IN ON his troubled face.

OMITTED

INT. WAREHOUSE - SHELDON'S POV

Several hundred men in Nazi uniforms in a warehouse draped in swastikas. They all start chanting:

NAZIS

Heil Smoochy! Heil Smoochy! Heil
Smoochy!

A huge swastika banner unfurls behind Smoochy, framing him like Patton in front of the American flag. Flashbulbs go off. The "Heil Smoochys" continue. A GERMAN MARCH starts to BLARE from the SPEAKERS. Looking stunned, Sheldon slowly leans into the mic. He clears his throat. The MUSIC STOPS. Everyone quiets down. He searches for just the right words, and finally...

SHELDON

It's my sincere hope that I'm
dreaming right now, but in the
event that I'm not... what's the
deal with the swastikas?

Suddenly, a sea of policemen bursts into the warehouse.

LEAD COP

This is an unlawful assembly, you
kraut sons-a-bitches! You're all
under arrest!

Pandemonium ensues as all the Nazis run for cover. Sheldon stands in the middle of it all, unsure what to do.

EXT. WAREHOUSE - SHORT WHILE LATER

Sheldon is led from the warehouse in handcuffs and is barraged with questions from waiting REPORTERS. Flashbulbs go off as they shout out questions.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

REPORTER #1

Are you officially a member of the Aryan Brotherhood, Sheldon?

REPORTER #2

Is it true you consider Adolph Hitler your personal hero?

REPORTER #3

Do you think associating with neo-Nazis might adversely affect your career?

REPORTER #4

How does it feel to be a hate-filled racist scumbag?

SHELDON

This is a mix-up! I'm innocent! I don't hate anyone!

REPORTER #4

Does that mean you don't hate Nazis?

SHELDON

Wait! I didn't say that! I --

Sheldon is shoved into the back seat of a squad car. It drives off, SIRENS BLARING.

MONTAGE

EXT. TIMES SQUARE - NIGHT

The squad car drives through Times Square. The headlines on the zipper marquee GLIDE THROUGH the FRAME: "Smoochy the Rhino Arrested at Nazi Rally... Cops Raid Warehouse During Rhino's Performance... Aryan Brotherhood Declares Smoochy 'One of us.'... President Condemns 'Smoochy the Fascist'..."

INT. SQUAD CAR - CONTINUOUS ACTION

Sheldon stares out the window as the dark city passes by. We SLOWLY MOVE IN ON his eyes as we...

DISSOLVE TO:

FLASHBACK - STUDIO C - SOMETIME IN PAST

In SLOW MOTION, Smoochy dances in the studio while holding a delighted little girl in his arms.

POLICE PRECINCT

Sheldon is fingerprinted and photographed.

AFRICAN JUNGLE

STOCK FOOTAGE of a wild rhinoceros being shot by hunters.

STUDIO C

Smoochy's Magic Jungle is dismantled.

SUBURBAN DRIVEWAY - PAST

A young Sheldon helps his grandfather spread black paint on a driveway.

TIMES SQUARE - DAY (PRESENT)

The Smoochy billboard is torn down.

BLACK LIMBO

The Smoochy costume is in flames. It slowly burns to ashes.

EXT. KIDNET BUILDING - LOBBY - DAY

The Kidnet CEO stands before a cluster of reporters and network cameras. We can see the Times Square zipper marquee THROUGH the glass doors behind him.

Headlines read: "Congressional Committee Probes Nazi Ties to Kid Biz"... "Smoochy Photos Removed From City Elementary Schools"... "Jewish Groups Plan 'Day of Outrage'"... "Rhino in Bronx Zoo Pelted With Eggs"...

CEO

Here at Kidnet, Smoochy the Rhino is now Smoochy the Ghost. We have excised that particular malignancy from our network and will seek out a suitable replacement.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

CEO (CONT'D)
 Until then, the Smoochy slot will
 be safely occupied by Popeye
 cartoons. Thank you.

The reporters furiously scribble down his statement.

END OF MONTAGE.

EXT. CITY STREET - DAY

Randolph dances down the street like Gene Kelly. He whistles a happy tune and tips his hat to everyone who walks by. As he dances along, he pets a dog...

RANDOLPH
 Hi there, poochy!

Coos at a baby in a stroller...

RANDOLPH
 Well, aren't you the cutest little
 boo-boo in the world!

And grabs a rose from a flower vendor before handing it to an old lady...

RANDOLPH
 For you, my dear! May you live to
 be a hundred!

He continues to dance onward, waving back at everyone. Unfortunately, he doesn't realize he's heading straight for a light pole and slams into it with a sickening smack.

RANDOLPH
 Fuck!

EXT. KIDNET BUILDING - NIGHT

Nora exits the revolving door of the Kidnet building and heads down Broadway. Sheldon pops out from a store front. He's wearing a knit cap and sunglasses to disguise himself.

SHELDON
 I have to talk to you.

Nora keeps walking.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

NORA

We have nothing to talk about.

SHELDON

Don't tell me you believe what they're saying!

NORA

I don't have to believe anyone. The picture in the paper said it all. No one forced you to perform at that rally.

SHELDON

Perform? I barely sang one song.

NORA

Well maybe next time you'll do a longer set.

SHELDON

Nora, I had no idea that was a Nazi function. None whatsoever!

NORA

Funny, you'd think the fifty-foot swastika you were standing in front of might've given you a hint.

SHELDON

The papers are blowing that out of proportion. It was nowhere near that big.

Nora stops and looks Sheldon in the eye.

NORA

Look, the fact of the matter is, I don't know you, okay? Not really. So don't expect me to go out on an emotional limb here.

Sheldon looks crushed.

SHELDON

But what about the balcony? What about the Klunky-Wunky dance?

NORA

I was drunk. Don't read too much into it.

She looks at him for a moment and then walks off.

EXT. TIMES SQUARE - DAYS LATER

A disheveled and unshaven Sheldon wanders the streets, looking dazed. He's stuffing a cupcake into his mouth and swigging from a bottle of root beer. He passes a construction site and notices some graffiti on a wall -- a crudely-drawn goose-stepping Smoochy in a Nazi uniform and Hitler moustache. Sheldon keeps walking. He descends the subway stairs at 42nd Street.

EXT. CONEY ISLAND STATION - STREET LEVEL - LATER

Sheldon comes up from the subway. We see the Cyclone from Astroland in the b.g.

EXT. SIDE STREET (CONEY ISLAND) - FEW MINUTES LATER

Sheldon stands in front of the methadone clinic he used to perform at. It's boarded up. He just stares at it. An OLD VAGRANT walks up to him.

OLD VAGRANT

If you're lookin' to get a cup of juice, the well's dried up, son. City shut her down. Bastards'll put a new pair of tits on the Statue of Liberty, but they won't help a poor hophead.

The Vagrant shakes his head sadly.

OLD VAGRANT

Just once I wish I had a little clout. You know? I'd set things straight in this town, believe me.
(sighs)
Hell of a world.

He walks off.

SHELDON

(to himself)
Hell of a world.

INT. STOKES' OFFICE

On a large screen TV the smiling Asian face of Takashi Yamashita, who's singing Cole Porter's "I Get a Kick Out of You" in Japanese.

CUT BACK to reveal Takashi wearing a white sequined tuxedo with tails as he plays a white grand piano. He looks like an Asian Liberace. He is circled by a group of Japanese children who sing along with him.

CHICK (V.O.)

'Takashi Sings Tin Pan Alley for Youngsters' is the hottest show on Japanese television. The sweat shops are working overtime trying to keep up with the demand. Record albums, toys, cereal, tee shirts, you name it...

INT. STOKES' OFFICE - DAY

Several tough-looking Asian men -- CHICK, SAMBO, and TOBI -- Takashi's management group -- sits in Stokes' office. Takashi sits quietly in the corner. Stokes sits behind his desk, sipping his trademark glass of wine.

CHICK

Look, Stokes, let's cut the bullshit. We want Takashi in that Smoochy slot and we're willing to do whatever it takes to get it.

STOKES

Pardon me for saying this, but for a non-resident of this country, you speak impeccable English.

CHICK

I'm originally from Teaneck.

STOKES

Ah.

CHICK

We own every hair on this bastard's head and we're willing to share a few strands... if you get my drift.

STOKES

Well, it's not that simple. I have an executive board to answer to. I wish I could just snap my fingers and make a deal but --

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

CHICK
You mean like this?

Chick snaps his fingers and Tobi, the third Asian guy, walks over and drops a duffel bag on Stokes' desk.

STOKES
Oh my. And what is this on my desk?

CHICK
Two hundred grand in a Louis Vuitton duffel bag. Get our boy the slot and we'll round it off to a million. And you can keep the luggage.

Stokes stares down at the bundle of opportunity on his desk.

CHICK
You're dealing with an honorable culture, Frank. We know how to play ball.

Stokes unzips the bag and gazes at the money. He looks up at Chick and smiles.

STOKES
Gentlemen, I suddenly feel invigorated and full of hope.

Chick smiles.

INT. NORA'S LIVING ROOM - EVENING

On Nora's TV screen, we see the black and white image of Rickets the Hippo doing the "Klunky-Wunky Dance." Nora sits on the couch and stares hypnotically at the screen. There is a KNOCK at the door. She gets up and ejects the "Best of Rickets" tape. She opens the door. To her surprise, Randolph is standing there.

RANDOLPH
Hiya, cutie!

Before she can respond, he enters the apartment and takes off his jacket.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

RANDOLPH

So here's the good news: Yes, I'll be happy to end my sabbatical and return to my old slot. I know you and Frank are in a bind, so I'll start Monday. Call wardrobe, call props, tell 'em the R man is back and he's ready to start whistlin' dem happy tunes for da little chillens.

He flops down on the couch.

RANDOLPH

Ahhh. Who do ya gotta blow to get a Scotch around here?

He laughs.

NORA

You've got three seconds to pry your ass off my couch and get out.

Randolph jumps to his feet.

RANDOLPH

Dammit, Nora! The rhino's gone! You need that slot filled and I'm ready to reclaim what's rightfully mine.

NORA

Just in case you forgot, you're a criminal and a scumbag.

RANDOLPH

Okay, so maybe I commandeered a stray shekel or two. Big deal! Compared to what Smoochy did that's like jerking off in the supermarket.

NORA

Where do you shop?

Randolph walks over and puts his hands on her shoulders.

RANDOLPH

Come on. Have you lost all affection for me? After what we once had?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

NORA

That was a long time ago. I was young and stupid.

RANDOLPH

Why we broke up I'll never know.

NORA

You turned into an asshole and I didn't love you.

RANDOLPH

We could've worked through all that.

He leans in to kiss her and she shoves him away so violently he almost falls over the coffee table.

RANDOLPH

Damn it, Nora! The public is clamoring for me! I'm a fucking patriot! Mopes is a Nazi! He's evil! He's probably even gay! You should've seen the way he was checking me out in the car!

NORA

(suddenly suspicious)
What does that mean?

RANDOLPH

What does what mean?

NORA

You said he was checking you out in the car. What car?

RANDOLPH

No... it's just a vibe! A Nazi homosexual vibe! It emanates from the television! The whole Smoochy costume... with the erect horn... I mean, what's that all about?

Nora starts to walk closer to him. He backs up.

NORA

You're talking awfully fast, Randolph.

RANDOLPH

I still love you! Let's go on a date!

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

NORA

Were you at that rally? Tell me!
Did you have something to do with
this?

She backs him against the wall and looks him in the eye.

NORA

Did you set Sheldon up?

Randolph just looks at her.

RANDOLPH

You know, now I remember why we
broke up. Always with the
accusations. Bitch, bitch,
bitch...

Nora hauls off and punches him in the jaw.

INT. SPINNER DUNN'S - NIGHT

A morose-looking Spinner Dunn sits alone at the end of
the bar in the nightclub. Tommy walks over.

TOMMY

What's wrong, kid? The mayor of
Patterson's here with his wife.
They wanna meet ya.

SPINNER

I don't wanna meet no one. I miss
Smoochy! He never woulda done the
things they say he done. He ain't
no Nazi. Someone's making stuff
up. I just know it, Tommy.
Someone's making stuff up!

Spinner starts violently pounding his head on the bar,
causing GLASSES to RATTLE.

SPINNER

I want Smoochy back! I want to be
on TV again! I want to play my
cowbell!

Nora enters the restaurant. She looks around and
approaches Tommy.

NORA

Hi, Tommy. Hi, Spinner. Has
Burke been in tonight?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

TOMMY
Haven't seen him.

NORA
Damn it.

TOMMY
Something I can help you with?

NORA
I have to talk to him. It's about Sheldon.

Spinner lifts his head from the bar.

SPINNER
Sheldon? What about Sheldon?

INT. ANGELO'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

Randolph is napping on Angelo's couch with an ice pack on his sore jaw thanks to Nora's fist. There is a sudden LOUD POUNDING at the door. Randolph startles awake.

RANDOLPH
I'm trying to sleep, asshole!
Read the fucking meter some other time!

After a beat, the door is kicked open and Tommy and his crew are standing there.

TOMMY
You wanna tell me about the rhino?

RANDOLPH
Hey, this is private property, creep! And you're trespassing!

TOMMY
Danny, go give Mr. Smiley a little back rub.

Danny advances toward a shaking Randolph, fist clenched and rolling up his sleeve.

RANDOLPH'S POV - DANNY

approaches. He cocks his arm and throws a punch. Danny's fist FILLS the FRAME, TURNING IT BLACK as we hear the PUNCH.

EXT. TIMES SQUARE - SERIES OF DISSOLVES - BEFORE DAWN

Newspaper trucks pull up to various newsstands and toss out bundles of the morning editions. As each bundle lands on the curb, we see headlines that span over the next few days:

SMOOCHY SET UP - SMILEY BEHIND NAZI PLOT

PLANNED TO DESTROY RHINO'S REP

POLL: RAINBOW RANDOLPH MOST HATED MAN IN AMERICA

PUBLIC OUTCRY: "WE'RE SORRY SMOOCHY!"

EXT. POLICE PRECINCT - DAY

Randolph, bruised and battered, emerges from the police station with his LAWYER. REPORTERS and photographers rush forward.

REPORTER #1

How does it feel to be voted the most hated man in America, Randolph?

RANDOLPH

In a country like this, where your average citizen is a fuckin' Neanderthal, I wear it as a badge of honor.

REPORTER #2

What about Ms. Bishop's charge that you have an unhealthy obsession with Sheldon Mopes?

RANDOLPH

Listen, I barely know that broad. She's a wacko. An opportunist. I'm the most accused man since Jimmy Hoffa.

Someone throws an egg and it hits Randolph in the face.

RANDOLPH

(on verge of tears)
That was unfair! Who threw that?
That was mean and uncalled for!

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

LAWYER

My client is not answering any more questions. Between his dwindling cash flow and mounting legal bills he's sinking into a deep psychotic depression. Please stop antagonizing him. Thank you.

He pushes a sullen Randolph through the cluster of people.

INT. BACKSTAGE - STUDIO C - DAY

A makeup woman dabs Sheldon's forehead as he's about to go on. Nora stands next to him. A LOW TYMPANY ROLL is heard from the stage.

SHELDON

(to Nora)

I wouldn't be back here if it wasn't for you.

NORA

I'm just sorry I didn't believe you... that I got swept up in the frenzy of anti-Smoochyism.

SHELDON

Well, this town's a house of mirrors sometimes. It's hard to know what you're looking at.

He takes a couple of pre-show deep breaths. A STAGEHAND approaches.

STAGEHAND

They're ready for you, Sheldon.

Sheldon exits backstage.

INT. STUDIO C - CONTINUOUS ACTION

The lights in the studio dim.

ANNOUNCER (V.O.)

Ladies and gentlemen... boys and girls...

(dramatic pause)

Who's your favorite rhino?

An explosion of enthusiasm from the kids in the bleachers.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

KIDS IN BLEACHERS

Smoochy!!!

The lights come up as the Smoochyland Band plays a strong, dramatic version of "Battle Hymn of the Republic." After a moment, Smoochy slowly rises from a lift under the stage. A giant sign above the jungle lights up and emits a pyrotechnic shower of sparks. It reads: WELCOME HOME SMOOCHY!

ANGLE ON SMOOCHYLAND BAND

A beaming Spinner Dunn enthusiastically bangs his cowbell to the music as tears stream down his cheeks.

BACK ON SMOOCHY

He majestically stands center stage and nods to the kids who are giving him a standing ovation. The song crescendos with a rousing final chorus from the Smoochyland Band who sing, "His truth is marching on!"

Thunderous applause from the bleachers. Smoochy walks over to a stool and takes a seat. It's very quiet in the studio now. Smoochy, looking uncharacteristically serious, picks up a microphone as the lights go down. He's in black limbo.

SMOOCHY

Thank you. It's good to be back. You know, kids, sometimes life in the jungle can be unfair. A place where nice guys don't just finish last... they get their heads cut off.

Gasps from the bleachers.

SMOOCHY

That pretty world you think you know is just props and scenery. Lollipop trees with roots in venom!

ANGLE - NORA

watches nervously from offstage.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

BACK ON SMOOCHY

SMOOCY

So look around you, boys and girls. Every day. Be diligent! Stand strong! As the old proverb says: Beat a dog one time too many and you get a wolf! Let's start howling! Howl for me, boys and girls!

The kids in the bleachers howl along with Smoochy.

SMOOCY

Okay, I just wanted to get that off my chest. Who wants to do the Hokey-Pokey?!

The kids cheer as the Smoochyland Band launches into the Hokey-Pokey song and Smoochy starts dancing. The kids pour out of the bleachers onto the jungle set. Everyone is dancing and having a ball. Nora is clapping to the music offstage. Sheldon and Nora exchange affectionate glances.

OMITTED

INT. ANGELO'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

Randolph sits in front of the TELEVISION in a daze. He's wearing a ratty bathrobe and absentmindedly tosses cheese curls onto the floor from a bag on his lap. ON the TV, an "Entertainment Tonight"-type show with two perky hosts is covering Smoochy's return to the airwaves. The hosts, Tara and Hunter show Smoochy's dynamic entrance and the standing ovation he got during the taping that day.

TARA (V.O.)

Well, Smoochy's back and boy did we miss him. Hundreds of well-wishers stood outside Kidnet Studios today hoping to catch a glimpse of their favorite rhino.

HUNTER (V.O.)

That's right, Tara. Smoochy's popularity is stronger than ever thanks to his recent exoneration as a Nazi sympathizer. In fact, several movie studios are offering big bucks for a chance to bring the Smoochy story to the silver screen...

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

The BROADCAST CONTINUES. Smoochy images flash across the screen. Randolph has been mumbling the whole time.

RANDOLPH
 (quietly to himself)
 Bad... very bad... too much for
 brain... pressure building... ears
 ringing... eyes burning...
 contempt overflowing...

He jumps up and kicks the TV over. He picks up a lamp and starts beating the TV.

RANDOLPH
 I hate you! I fucking hate you!!!
 You devil-horned mind fucker!
 Die, die, die!!

Angelo, who was cooking in the kitchen, runs out. He's wearing an apron.

ANGELO
 What are you doing?! That's a
 Zenith!
 (notices cheese curls)
 Look at this place!

He grabs the lamp from Randolph.

ANGELO
 That's it! I want you out of
 here!

RANDOLPH
 (suddenly scared)
 Where am I supposed to go?

ANGELO
 I don't care!
 (pointing to door)
 Out!!

INT. SPINNER DUNN'S - NIGHT

Spinner's massive arms envelope Sheldon in a bear hug, practically lifting him out of his seat. Burke, who's having dinner with Sheldon, holds onto the table before it gets knocked over.

SHELDON
 Easy, Spinner. Watch the ribs,
 buddy.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

SPINNER

I missed you so much!

SHELDON

I missed you too, champ.

He drops Sheldon and pulls out his cowbell.

SPINNER

I've been practicing and practicing and I got real good, Sheldon. Real good!

He starts banging on it with a butter knife. Sheldon cringes.

SPINNER

Wanna see me march?

SHELDON

Sure, why not.

Spinner starts marching through the restaurant, clanging the cowbell. People who are trying to eat their dinner look annoyed. Sheldon sits back down at his table.

BURKE

So you were saying you had some good news?

SHELDON

Yes. Some very good news. After giving it a lot of thought... I've decided to do the ice show.

Burke gleefully slaps Sheldon on the shoulder.

BURKE

Finally! I got me a bar mitzvah boy. Today you are a man!

SHELDON

I realize now it's a sin to waste your power.

BURKE

Like they say, rock bottom's a college education.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

SHELDON

But here's the really good news: I'm doing it myself. No sponsors, no vendors, no crooks. Not one dirty hand will touch this. Not one person will make a dollar off these kids. Smoochy on Ice will be a study in purity.

Burke's grin suddenly fades.

SHELDON

As far as food concessions go, I'll supply the refreshments. For free. Low sodium, whole wheat pretzels and apple slices. Healthy stuff. Now are you ready for the best part?

BURKE

I'm holding my breath.

SHELDON

All profits from ticket sales will be used to built a state-of-the-art methadone clinic in Coney Island.

Burke looks pale.

SHELDON

I'm not just talking a run-of-the-mill clinic... I'm going to build a methadone palace. A place where men and women can withdraw in luxury.

BURKE

Sheldon, you can't do an ice show and cut out the vendors. And more importantly, you can't cut out the Parade of Hope. It's suicide.

SHELDON

You always told me, when you've got muscles you make the rules. Well, I'm feeling pretty strong right now.

Sheldon rises and tosses his napkin down.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

SHELDON

All this time I was letting the business use me. Well, I think it's time I start using the business. I've got my clout back and I'm not gonna waste it this time. Take care of it, Burke.

Sheldon exits. Burke sits there, looking very concerned.

On his way out the door, Tommy stops Sheldon. Spinner's COWBELL CLANGING continues.

TOMMY

Shel, you gotta help me out. He bangs that goddamn thing from morning till night. I got a headache that goes from my eyes to my ass.

SHELDON

Whatever I can do, Tommy, just say it. You know I love Spinner. And I owe you.

TOMMY

Give the boy something else to do on the show. Anything. Just as long as it don't clang, chime or honk.

INT. STOKES' OFFICE - TIGHT ON FACE OF FRANK STOKES - DAY

frightened. There's a gun to his temple.

WIDER

Chick, the Asian representative of Takashi, holds a revolver on Stokes. His cohorts, Sambo and Tobi, stand by.

CHICK

I don't like complications, Frank. You got one week to get Takashi that slot or you're gonna be shakin' hands with Buddha.

STOKES

Don't you understand? My hands are tied. The rhino's been exonerated. The show's more popular than ever.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

CHICK
 (to Sambo and Tobi)
 Okay, boys, chop him up, bag him
 and dump him in the woods.

Sambo and Tobi start to advance on Stokes.

STOKES
 All right! I'll take care of it!
 I just need time!

Chick leans into Stokes' face.

CHICK
 One week, Jeeves. Got that? Or
 I get a blender and make an Orange
 Julius with your feet.

They exit.

EXT. STREET - DAY

A down-and-out Randolph shuffles along in ratty bedroom slippers. He passes a MAN who sits behind a small table on the sidewalk. The table has a huge photograph of a rhinoceros taped in front of it. Literature and pamphlets depicting the black rhino are spread out on the table.

MAN
 Save the rhino! Before it's too
 late! Make a donation! Save the
 rhino!
 (to Randolph)
 Hey, mister, ya wanna help save
 the rhino?

Randolph just looks at him for a moment. He looks at all the rhino-related imagery. He starts shaking and suddenly jumps over the table and attacks the Man.

RANDOLPH
I'm the one who needs to be saved!
Me. I'm broke! I lost my lawyer!
 My only friend kicked me out! I'm
 a fucking peanut shell in the
 shape of a man! Save the
 Rainbow! Save the Rainbow!
 Save the Rainbow!

MAN
 Help! Someone call a cop!

Randolph grabs the collection can and runs off.

EXT. CENTRAL PARK - DAY

It's a chilly, grey afternoon. Stokes and Burke walk along the lake framed by the New York skyline.

STOKES

Your client is suffocating me. To make matters worse, he's caused me to veer into a hazardous situation. A situation that otherwise could have a very happy ending.

BURKE

Tell me more about the Asians.

STOKES

They're ruthless. Unwavering. Unprincipled. And best of all, they know how the game is played. They respect our delicate ecosystem of mutual benefit.

Stokes stops walking and grabs Burke's arm.

STOKES

I'd bring you in on this, Burke. You'd be my partner on the Takashi deal. Split down the middle. We have an opportunity to get back on track here. Back to the way it was.

BURKE

The good old days.

STOKES

Pre-rhinoceros.

The two men look at each other as thoughts pass silently between them.

BURKE

This is very sticky ground we're about to walk on.

STOKES

Well, you're used to a little glue on your shoes.

Burke smiles.

BURKE

Let me poke around. Sift through the possibilities.

OMITTED

EXT. ALLEY OFF ND STREET - THEATER STAGE DOOR -
EVENING

A slender young man in a Peter Pan costume is being held by a big thug as another thug beats him up. A girl dressed as Tinkerbell (also being restrained) looks on in horror. Merv Green (Parade of Hope) steps INTO FRAME.

MERV

This is what happens to guys who
keep secrets, Johnny.

JOHNNY

I'll give you the rest next week!
I promise!

MERV

It's not me you're fucking over,
it's sick kids. You got something
against sick kids, Johnny?

The thug punches him in the stomach again.

JOHNNY

No! I love sick kids!

Merv nods to one of the thugs who releases Peter Pan. He slumps to the ground. Merv kneels down and lifts his head from the pavement.

MERV

And you tell that fat producer of
yours, if he ever gives me a low
head count again, he'll lose the
other thumb.

One of Merv's thugs leans in, whispers something to Merv, who looks up to see.

Burke standing in the mouth of the alley.

BURKE

Merv Green. How's tricks, kid?

MERV

Well, if it ain't smilin' Burke.
Whose bones are you pickin' today?

BURKE

(chuckles)
You got a minute, pally?

OMITTED

EXT. ND STREET - MOMENTS LATER

Burke and Merv walk along 42nd Street. A poster advertises Peter Pan "Sponsored by Parade of Hope -- Giving Children the Gift of Promise!" Merv's thugs trail behind.

MERV

No one freezes me out of an ice show. No one. I don't care how many fucking clinics he's trying to save.

BURKE

Look, I'm chokin' on the same bone as you.

MERV

If you're trying to aggravate me, you're doing a hell of a job.

BURKE

I'm not here to aggravate, just educate. I think Mopes might be talking to people he shouldn't be talking to.

MERV

That's an ugly string of words.

BURKE

He's got it in his head that he's gonna clean up the way we do business.

(beat)

Truthfully? I wouldn't be surprised if he's wearing a wire.

Burke looks at his watch.

BURKE

Jesus, I got a thing across town.

He steps off the curb to hail a cab.

BURKE

Let's keep talking, Merv. There's oughta be some kind of solution. Don't you think?

Burke hops into a cab. Merv watches the cab pull away.

EXT. TIMES SQUARE - OUTSIDE KIDNET BUILDING - TIGHT
SHOT - LEGS OF SMALL CARD TABLE - MORNING

SNAP open. The table is set on the sidewalk. A man's legs ENTER the FRAME and shakily climb on top of the table.

WIDER

Randolph stands on the table directly in front of the Kidnet Building. He raises the megaphone to his mouth.

RANDOLPH
Attention, New Yorkers! You are
about to hear a shocking story
of injustice!

WIDER

Randolph stands on the table directly in front of the Kidnet Building.

RANDOLPH
I urge you to listen! It has a
surprise ending you won't want
to miss!

A crowd starts to form on the sidewalk.

RANDOLPH
It's the story of a venomous rhino
and his aggressive campaign to
slander, vilify, defame, denigrate
and villainize my good name! But
one thing he can't do, is take my
life from me. No, friends, only I
have the power to do that!

He reaches down and picks up a can of gasoline.

RANDOLPH
This is what Smoochy has done to
me! He's brought me to this! I
can no longer live in a world
where the innocent suffer and
the wicked thrive!

Randolph raises the can over his head and pauses dramatically.

RANDOLPH
Where is God??!!

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

He drenches himself with gasoline. The crowd grows larger. He holds up a pack of matches.

RANDOLPH
I'm sorry to do this, people.
Don't try to talk me out of it.

The crowd starts to applaud. Randolph looks baffled.

MAN IN CROWD
Do it! Light it!

RANDOLPH
Our guest of honor will be here
any moment! This is for his eyes!
For his conscience. He'll have to
live with this imagine for the
rest of his miserable life!

INT. LIMO - CONTINUOUS ACTION

Sheldon sits in the back of a limo on his way to work, reading the paper. The headline blares: "SMOOCHY ANNOUNCES ICE SHOW AT GARDEN." The subhead reads: "ALL PROCEEDS TO BENEFIT BROOKLYN CLINIC."

SMOOCHY
(to driver)
Take it from me, Lester. Use your
power. Don't squander it -- build
with it.

LESTER
Sound advice, Mr. Mopes. If I
ever get any power I'll give that
a whirl.
(notices crowd
up ahead)
Hey, what's going on up there?

Sheldon glances up from his paper.

SMOOCHY
(casually)
Looks like a street performer of
some sort.

He goes back to his paper.

EXT. TIMES SQUARE - CONTINUOUS ACTION

Randolph sees the Kidnet limo approaching.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

RANDOLPH

This is it, folks! It's showtime!
I'm sorry to do this, but he's
left me no choice!

Randolph tries to light another match, but it's wet from the gasoline. The crowd laughs and starts taunting him.

RANDOLPH

Shut up, you hillbilly assholes!
You're borough trash! Go back to
your huts across the river!

Randolph keeps trying to light the match. Finally, after several attempts, it lights. He holds it up. The crowd burst into applause.

RANDOLPH

Fuck you! Fuck all you people! I
was the last of the Mohicans!
You'll never see another Rainbow
Randolph in this lifetime! You
had me and you blew it! All of
you!

He turns and faces the approaching limousine.

RANDOLPH

This if for you, Smoochy!
Remember this! As long as you
live, remember this image! You
did this to me!

He brings the match closer to his gasoline-soaked body. The limo continues to approach. The crowd taunts him to do it. He tries to bring the match closer, but his hand is shaking. Suddenly, a LITTLE GIRL pushes through the crowd. Everyone quiets down as she looks up at Randolph.

LITTLE GIRL

Whatcha doin', Rainbow Randolph?

Randolph freezes as he looks down at the Little Girl. A slight look of hope comes over his face. She smiles sweetly at him, walks over, and blows out the match. Randolph is overcome with emotion. Just then, Sheldon's LIMO WHOOSHES past him. The crowd cheers.

CROWD

Smoochy!!!

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

They all run away from Randolph and over to Sheldon's limo as it pulls in front of the Kidnet Building. Randolph stares at them blankly. He looks down. The Little Girl is gone. Sheldon gets out of the limo. The crowd cheers him as he waves to them before going inside.

A look of utter frustration now comes over Randolph.

OVERHEAD SHOT

Randolph drops to his knees on the table, looks skyward, and screams.

RANDOLPH
What does it all mean??!!

The CAMERA RISES ABOVE him as he lets out an anguished howl that REVERBERATES through the skyscrapers.

INT. KIDNET STUDIOS - BACKSTAGE - TIGHT ON DISAPPOINTED
FACE OF SPINNER DUNN - DAY

SPINNER
What do you mean I can't play the
cowbell no more?

WIDER

Sheldon gently tries to break the news to Spinner who's on the verge of tears.

SHELDON
You're too talented for the
cowbell, Spinner. Cowbells are
for babies.

SPINNER
(a little angry)
I ain't no baby!

SHELDON
That's right. You're a fully
grown man. With whiskers... and
scars... the whole sha-bang.
That's why you deserve a bigger
role on the show. A more
important role...

Spinner's face starts to perk up.

INT. STUDIO C - SHORT WHILE LATER

It's the middle of a Smoochy taping. Smoochy and the Gang are wrapping up a song entitled, "My Stepdad's Not Mean (He's Just Adjusting.)" The kids in the bleachers are singing the chorus.

KIDS

'Stepdads are people too/ They
have bad days, like we all do/
Be patient and help them through/
Stepdads are people too...'

Smoochy continues the song.

SMOOCHY

(singing)

... 'So three cheers for the man
that I proudly call Stan... He's
not quite a dad or a brother...
Yes, he gets cross, but still he's
the boss... And besides he takes
care of my mother!'

The song ends. The kids in the bleachers applaud.
Smoochy addresses them.

SMOOCHY

Remember, kids. First
impressions, good or bad, are not
always what they seem. Just like
a new puppy, new dads need to
adjust to their surroundings. So
give 'em time! But always
remember... if he becomes abusive
to you or Mommy... what are the
magic numbers?

KIDS IN BLEACHERS

(shouting in unison)

Nine-One-One!

SMOOCHY

Right-o-riffic!

The Smoochyland Band plays a little fanfare.

SMOOCHY

And now, boys and girls, I have a
special surprise. I'd like to
introduce the newest member of the
Magic Jungle... my cousin...
Moochy the Rhino!

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

The Smoochyland Band plays a happy little song as Spinner Dunn, in costume as Moochy, runs on stage. The Moochy costume is identical to Smoochy only it's a darker orange instead of bright orange.

SMOOCHY
Howdy, Moochy! Welcome to the
Jungle! You wanna say howdy to
the kids?

Spinner freezes. He stares at the camera.

SMOOCHY
Moochy?

SPINNER
My name is Moochy.

SMOOCHY
That's right. We've established
that.

SPINNER
(leaning into Sheldon)
Sheldon, this costume's makin' my
nuts itch.

Sheldon looks horrified. The Smoochyland Band quickly launches into some music. Smoochy, Moochy and a few other jungle animals begin to dance. Moochy's lumbering movements are in stark contrast to the choreographed steps of the others. As a bonus, he occasionally scratches his crotch.

INT. SHELDON'S DRESSING ROOM - AFTER THE SHOW

A happy Spinner (still in costume as Moochy) pokes his head into Sheldon's dressing room. Sheldon, still in costume as well, looks drained after the difficult taping.

SPINNER
That was fun! Was it bad when I
done that thing, where I tripped
and knocked over the Flamingo and
then he knocked over the cameraman
and then those lights fell down on
that lady's head?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

SHELDON

It's fine, Spinner. We'll edit it out. But tomorrow in rehearsal we're gonna work on a new thing called 'the importance of hitting your mark.'

SPINNER

Great! I get to hit something!

Spinner dances off. A beat later, Nora enters and shuts the door. There's an awkward beat of silence.

NORA

Hi.

SHELDON

Hi.

NORA

I read about the ice show.

SHELDON

Yeah, the papers seem to be really covering it.

NORA

I think it's great. What you're doing for that clinic.

SHELDON

Thanks.

She nods.

NORA

I just need some clarification...

SHELDON

Don't worry. Spinner just needs a little more rehearsal. I'll get him there.

NORA

No I mean about us.

Sheldon looks uncomfortable.

NORA

Ever since you've been back I just feel like there's something that's not connecting.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

SHELDON

I guess I'm still readjusting a little. Like a guy who's come back from the war. Not that I'd equate my misfortune with the

brave men and women who protect us overseas.

NORA

I just thought we were on our way to something... granted, my mistaken belief that you had ties to Neo-Nazis might have put a damper on our relationship, but I'm sorry for --

Sheldon suddenly jumps up and grabs her. He kisses her passionately. Nora immediately starts ripping off his costume as they make out. They fall to the floor in a lustful embrace.

INT. STUDIO - BACK HALLWAY - SAME TIME

Spinner, humming to himself, lumbers down the hallway on his way to the wardrobe room. Halfway down the hall, he hears a voice call out to him.

VOICE (O.S.)

Hey -- rhino.

Spinner turns around. The door to the fire exit swings open. Two of Merv's thugs emerge and grab Spinner (who's still in full Moochy costume) and drag him into the stairwell.

INT. UNDERGROUND PARKING GARAGE - MOMENT LATER

Spinner is dragged into the garage and knocked to the pavement. Several more thugs emerge from the shadows, including Henry, Merv's main henchman. They start beating him with lead pipes. Henry pulls out a REVOLVER. He SHOOTs the rhino several times. A sedan trunk is popped open and Moochy is thrown inside. The CAR SCREECHES up to the street.

INT. CHINATOWN - NIGHT

We CRANE DOWN FROM a Chinese banner that stretches across two tenements. We LAND ON the seedy, deserted street below as the SEDAN BARRELS INTO FRAME and SQUEALS to a stop.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Two thugs emerge from the car. They pull Spinner/Moochy from the trunk and toss his body by some garbage cans, knocking a few over. They get back in the car and speed away. Moochy's lifeless foam body rolls into the gutter and lays motionless. Blood seeps through his foamy torso.

LOW OVERHEAD SHOT

of Spinner/Moochy. We SLOWLY START TO RISE UP as we LOOK DOWN AT the rhino's body. The WIND WHISTLES through the empty street as we get HIGHER. The Chinese banner rustles THROUGH the FRAME. As we get HIGHER AND HIGHER, we hear the intermittent CLANG of a PRIZE FIGHT BELL.

MATCH DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. SAME STREET - HOURS LATER

In the same frame, detectives and uniformed cops are now at the scene gathering evidence. Where Spinner once lay, there is now a bright yellow chalk outline in the shape of a rhinoceros.

INT. PARADE OF HOPE OFFICES - NEXT DAY

FULL FRAME ON a TELEVISION screen. A local news anchor is reading the top story.

ANCHOR (V.O.)

Former heavyweight contender and restaurateur Lawrence 'Spinner' Dunn was found shot to death in a rhinoceros outfit early this morning in Chinatown. Dunn, a frequent performer on 'Smoochy's Magic Jungle,' was pronounced dead at the scene. Police are searching for --

A hand ENTERS FRAME and violently slaps the TV OFF.

WIDE

An enraged Merv Green glares at his henchmen, Henry and MITCH.

MERV

How could you hit the wrong rhino?!

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

HENRY

Who knew Smoochy had a cousin Moochy? They look fucking identical.

MERV

Smoochy is bright orange, Moochy is burnt rust! Read the papers! Do I gotta take you back to fucking kindergarten?

MITCH

All you said was 'hit the rhino.' You never specified the color. I'm not taking the blame for this one.

Merv's anger builds. He turns to a picture of Smoochy which is tacked to a bulletin board along with other kid show personalities that the foundation extorts. Merv picks up a letter opener and violently thrusts it into the picture.

MERV

I'm not through with you yet, rhino! Your time will fucking come!

INT. ANGELO'S APARTMENT - SHORT WHILE LATER

Cops rummage through Angelo's apartment. In the b.g., a detective, ELLIS, interviews Angelo. Another detective, McCALL, is looking through some papers he found.

MCCALL

Ellie, over here.

Ellis walks over. McCall shows him some scribblings he's found in a notebook of Randolph's. The crude drawings depict Smoochy with his head cut off... with a knife in his heart... being pissed on by Randolph, etc. "Die, Rhino, Die" is scrawled hundreds of times, filling page after page. The two detectives look at each other and nod.

INT. SPINNER DUNN'S RESTAURANT - DAY

Spinner sleeps forever in an open casket, clutching his cowbell. Dozens of Spinner's relatives are at the wake.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

A bagpipe player plays "Amazing Grace." Sheldon stands at the casket, fighting back tears as he stares down at his old friend. Nora has her arm around him.

SHELDON

It's my fault. He'd still be alive if it wasn't for me. He would have been so proud to be in the ice show.

NORA

There was nothing you could have done. Don't torture yourself.

SHELDON

I'm sorry, Spinner. I'm so sorry.

Tommy and the boys walk over. Tommy puts his arm around Sheldon as he gazes somberly at Spinner.

TOMMY

He really loved you, Shel. And this I guarantee -- that fucking Randolph has seen his last rainbow. We're gonna find him, cut off his balls, and shove 'em up his ass.

SHELDON

Maybe you better leave it to the police.

DANNY

They won't do the ball thing. It's against procedure.

TOMMY

Don't forget -- that hit was meant for you, Shel. So from now on, everywhere you go, we go.

SHELDON

That's okay, Tommy. I'll be fine.

TOMMY

Fine, nothin'. And as Christ is my witness, no one's touchin' a hair on your fuckin' head. Spinner would have wanted it that way.

Tommy's crew nods and agrees.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

TOMMY
 (to the boys)
 Alright, boys, let's get shit-
 faced. For Spin.

They head for the bar. Nora and Sheldon look down at Spinner in silence.

SHELDON
 Didn't Ricketts the Hippo have a
 song about death?

NORA
 'The Last Nappy Time.' It gave me
 a lot of comfort when my mother
 died.
 (sings quietly)
 'When doggies stop barking
 And fish cease to swim
 And Grandpa lays silent, from his
 head to his limbs
 Sadness will find you
 But soon you'll feel fine...'

Sheldon joins in.

SHELDON/NORA
 'In life we all have
 Our Last Nappy Time.'

Sheldon looks at her. They embrace as BAGPIPE MUSIC SWELLS.

OMITTED

EXT. TIMES SQUARE - NIGHT

The news zipper in Times Square glides through the night air: "MANHUNT UNDERWAY FOR RAINBOW RANDOLPH... SUSPECTED IN BOXER'S MURDER... SEEN OUTSIDE BUILDING SHORTLY BEFORE SHOOTING, DRENCHED IN GASOLINE AND ACTING PECULIAR..."

We CRANE DOWN FROM the zipper ONTO the sidewalk. Randolph is talking on a pay phone. We hear Angelo on the other end.

RANDOLPH
 I didn't do it! I know you're
 still mad at me, but you gotta
 believe me.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

ANGELO (V.O.)

The papers say you were the
mastermind.

RANDOLPH

Mastermind? I can barely figure
out how to unzip my pants these
days. Just taking a piss is a
logistical nightmare.

ANGELO (V.O.)

I believe you, Randy. But you
can't come back to my place.
They'll find you. You gotta go
underground.

EXT. LIBERTY FLOUR AND BISCUIT FACTORY - NIGHT

We are outside the long-abandoned Liberty Biscuit and
Flour factory. The Liberty sign with its Statue of
Liberty logo is eroded and partially missing.

INT. LIBERTY BISCUIT AND FLOUR FACTORY - CONTINUOUS
ACTION

Inside the massive dormant factory, rats scurry around
and pigeons occasionally fly from window sill to window
sill. A makeshift living area has been set up in the
middle of it all -- a chair, lamp, small table, hot
plate, etc. Randolph lays on the dilapidated conveyor
belt, huddled under a blanket.

Angelo enters the factory through a rusty door, carrying
provisions.

ANGELO

It's heatin' up out there. Every
cop in New York is looking for
you. And Tommy Cotter's boys are
combin' the streets. You're gonna
have to stay put for a while.

Randolph sits up on the conveyor belt, blanket draped
over his shoulders. He's a physical and emotional wreck.

RANDOLPH

I was an altar boy once. Did you
know that? I wanted to be a
priest. Do you believe in angels,
Angie?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

ANGELO

Angels?

RANDOLPH

There was a little angel in pigtails. She was the only one who cared about me. She saved my life.

Angelo hops up on the conveyor belt to console Randolph. Randolph rests his head on Angelo's shoulder.

ANGELO

You didn't want to kill yourself, Randy. You know that.

RANDOLPH

Perhaps it's time to heal. To accept the fact that Smoochy has won and gracefully march forward. True, I'm currently wanted for a murder I didn't commit. But I have faith. Faith that justice will prevail.

ANGELO

Now you're talkin', kid. This is a big step... I'm proud of you.

He strokes Randolph's head.

RANDOLPH

Did you bring lunch?

ANGELO

Yes.

RANDOLPH

Chicken and stars?

ANGELO

Just like you asked for.

RANDOLPH

Can I have some, please?

ANGELO

For a smile.

Randolph sniffs and manages a small pitiful smile. Angelo musses his hair.

ANGELO

Atta boy.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Angelo lifts one of the grocery bags onto the conveyor belt.

ANGELO

Here, I got you some crossword puzzles and stuff to read.

Angelo hops off the conveyor belt and turns on the hot plate. He starts to open a can of soup. Randolph reaches into the bag and pulls out a copy of the New York Post. The lead article's headline reads, "WAKE FOR SPINNER." A large photograph shows mourners leaving the restaurant after the wake. Clearly visible are Sheldon and Nora. They have their arms around each other. Randolph's eyes widen. He starts to hyperventilate. Angelo looks up.

ANGELO

You okay? Randy?

Finally, Randolph expels a blood-curdling scream that ECHOES through the factory.

RANDOLPH

Motherfucker!!!!!!!

Angelo drops the soup. Birds in the factory flutter from the rafters.

INT. MADISON SQUARE GARDEN - ICE RINK

Sheldon and the Rhinettes work on some choreography for that night's show. Nora watches from the sidelines. As Sheldon skates on the ice rink, Merv enters with Roy and Danny. Sheldon skates over to them. Nora walks over, too.

TOMMY

Big news, Shel.

SHELDON

What's that?

TOMMY

It wasn't Smiley who killed Spinner. It was Parade of Hope.

NORA

Merv Green?

SHELDON

Are you sure? The cops have tons of evidence on Randolph.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

TOMMY

We did our own investigation.
Cousin Ian from down at the
morgue... you met him at the
wake...

FLASHBACK - INT. SPINNER DUNN'S - DAY

Tommy is at the bar listening intently to a man, IAN,
who is pointing to certain details on a photograph.

IAN

See the neck? Snapped like a
twig. Animals... Parade of Hope's
calling card. When they do a guy,
they like to sign the tab.

TOMMY

What's that guy's name over there?
Green?

LEON

Yeah, Merv Green.

TOMMY

This was one time they shoulda
left the tab blank.

INT. ICE RINK (PRESENT)

NORA

I knew Merv Green was a scumbag
from the day he grabbed my ass at
a 'Feed the Children' benefit.

SHELDON

Well, God help those guys now.
They're gonna get a first-class
ride through the criminal justice
system, and I'm buying the
tickets.

TOMMY

It's all taken care of, Shel.

SHELDON

What does that mean?

FLASHBACK - INT. WAREHOUSE - NIGHT

A bloodied Merv Green is tied to a chair in the middle of the warehouse as he begs Tommy for his life. Merv's two henchmen lay dead nearby. Roy, Jimmy and Sammy -- Tommy's guys -- stand behind her.

MERV

It was a mistake! An honest mistake! All I'm trying to do is help children.

TOMMY

You like kids, huh?

MERV

Yes! Of course!

TOMMY

So you must know a few fairy tales. Danny, tell him the one about the worthless prick who gets his head chopped off.

Danny, holding a hatchet, advances toward Merv. Tommy casually walks away. We STAY WITH Tommy. Merv is NO LONGER IN FRAME.

MERV (O.S.)

No... no... no!

He SCREAMS.

We hear the sound of the HATCHET HITTING its target. Merv's pleading stops.

TOMMY

Now you know why charities go under sometimes.

INT. ICE RINK (PRESENT)

SHELDON

Do we really need to hear this?
I don't want to hear this.

JIMMY

A clean cut.

SHELDON

Okay, got it.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

ROY

And then we took his head and --

SHELDON

Thank you! Specifics about his head are superfluous at this point.

INT. STOKES' OFFICE - EVENING

Nora is alone in Stokes' office, rearranging cards on the giant cork board that displays the network schedule. She is startled to hear a deep voice behind her.

VOICE (O.S.)

Where is he?

She turns around. Chick, Tobi, and Sambo are standing there. Chick walks over to the cork board. He scans a row of cards that all read "Smoochy."

NORA

(attitude)

Can I help you with something?

CHICK

Yeah, honey, you can help us with something...

He rips a Smoochy index card from the board, walks over to her and waves it in her face.

CHICK

You tell that boss of yours he better take care of the rhino problem. In my culture we honor deals or invite consequences.

NORA

I don't know what you're talking about and your cologne's making me nauseous. Other than that, you're great company.

Chick looks at his boys and chuckles.

CHICK

Spicy little thing, isn't she?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

He suddenly pulls out a switchblade and holds it to Nora's throat.

CHICK

Takashi gets that time slot. You hear me, girly? Tell that boss of yours we'll kill everyone at this fucking network if we have to. Starting with the pretty ones.

He removes the knife from her throat and hurls it toward the bulletin board. It lands -- sticking right in the middle of a Smoochy card.

CHICK

Auf Wiedersehen, honey.

They exit.

INT. SHELDON'S PENTHOUSE - NIGHT

Nora is pacing. Sheldon sits by the fire.

NORA

It's Stokes. He's behind the whole thing! He cut some kind of deal for the Smoochy slot!

SHELDON

What are you talking about?

NORA

He wants you out so he can put Takashi in!

SHELDON

Who's Takashi?

NORA

Jesus, Sheldon! Don't you ever pick up a copy of International Performer? He's the hottest kid show host from Asia.

Sheldon's head is swimming. Suddenly the front door to the penthouse bursts open. Randolph, dressed like he's about to do his old show, stumbles in waving a gun.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

RANDOLPH

Ah! How very cozy. Like two logs
in a little bonfire. All we need
is a few sticks and some wienies.

He almost trips as he stumbles over to Sheldon. He
waves the gun in his face.

RANDOLPH

I had her before you! Pachyderm!
I was in love with her! In love!
And you snatched her away! Like
a common thief! You're the bad
guy! Not me! He's the bad guy,
Nora. He's incapable of
understanding the love we once
had! Tender, yet passionate.
Old-fashioned, yet experimental.

(cackles)

Tell him about a few of our
experiments, Nora! Tell him!

Sheldon looks stunned. Nora hangs her head.

SHELDON

(to Nora)

Is this true? Please tell me it's
just the confused ramblings of a
diseased mind.

She looks at him, but doesn't say anything.

SHELDON

Holy mother of Toledo. When
exactly were you planning to let
me know about this?!

NORA

(turns to Sheldon)

Listen, there was a time -- and
I'm not proud of this -- but there
was a time when I was a bit of
a... kiddie-host groupie.

RANDOLPH

You're just another action figure
for her collection!

NORA

That's not fair!

RANDOLPH

Tell him about Jingle Jackson!

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

SHELDON

You dated Jingle Jackson?

RANDOLPH

The bells turned her on. Hey, tell him about Jumbo Johnny! There's a tale for ya! A whale of a tale!

She looks down, somewhat ashamed. A look of utter shock comes over Sheldon.

SHELDON

Oh good Lord in Heaven.

NORA

Look, what I did before I met you is none of your business.

RANDOLPH

Shut up! Both of you! This is my show!

He waves the gun threateningly as he backs up to an armchair and sits down.

RANDOLPH

Do you fully understand the power of a condemned man? Do you? I'm already wanted for one murder, why should I give a flaming horse's twat if I commit two more?

SHELDON

I... uh... read once that the best way to diffuse a tense situation is with a little humor. To that end, would you like to hear a funny joke?

RANDOLPH

(rolling his eyes)

Oh, please. Go blow yourself, Martha.

(waves gun again)

Fix me a beverage, woman. Make me one of those drinks that used to make us all warm and fuzzy before bouncy-bouncy time!

NORA

Fix it yourself, asshole.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

RANDOLPH
 (points to gun)
 Remember, I have Mr. Boomy.

SHELDON
 I'm telling you, you'd love this
 joke. It revolves around Santa
 Claus and the Easter Bunny getting
 into a fender bender.

Nora rolls her eyes and goes to the bar.

RANDOLPH
 (to Sheldon)
 You know, when I lived here I used
 to have a big painting above the
 fireplace. A naked chick holding
 a pumpkin. It was very tasteful.
 No bush...

NORA
 Look, Randolph. We know it
 wasn't you who killed Spinner.

SHELDON
 We'll go to the police, first
 thing tomorrow... straighten
 everything out.

RANDOLPH
 Oh! Goody-goody gumdrops!
 (to Nora)
 Vodka straight up is fine, sugar
 babe!

He grabs the bottle out of her hand. He rises from the
 chair. He takes a CD, "PARTY TIME WITH RAINBOW
 RANDOLPH," from his pocket and puts it into an
 audio system on the fireplace wall.

RANDOLPH
 Did you put on a little weight,
 honey? That's okay, you're still
 a hot little brood mare. I bet
 you miss the sweet sting of my
 riding crop. Giddy up, pony!

The THEME SONG from his show starts to PLAY. He flicks
 a switch and a spotlight goes on. He sings and dances.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

RANDOLPH
 (to tune of
 'Ol' MacDonald)
 'Rainbow Randolph is the man.
 Yes he, yes he, is.
 He's the Prez of Rainbowland.
 Yes he, yes he, is.
 With some fun, fun here, and a
 laugh, laugh there.
 Here a dance, there a song,
 Everything is fun, fun.
 Rainbow Randolph is the King, the
King of Rainbowland!'

Randolph takes another drink from the vodka bottle. Sheldon suddenly lunges at Randolph and tries to grab the gun. Randolph shrieks. The two men wrestle on the floor, but Randolph is not much of a fighter. He screams as Sheldon rolls him toward the fireplace.

SHELDON
 Is this what you want? A Hansel
 and Gretel ending?! You want to
 be the big bad wolf?

RANDOLPH
 Stop! It's too hot! The heat!
 It's driving me mad!

Randolph rolls Sheldon to the bottom. Nora reaches for a fireplace poker and whacks Randolph with it. Randolph cries out and drops the gun. Sheldon grabs it and points it at Randolph who lies on the floor, blubbering like a child. He's bleeding.

RANDOLPH
 Go ahead, kill me! Finish me off.
 My life's over anyway. Everything
 I touch turns to shit. Put me out
 of my misery.

Sheldon slowly takes the gun away from Randolph's head.

SHELDON
 You're not nothing. You're
 bitter, misguided and I'm guessing
 a raging alcoholic, but you're
 still Rainbow Randolph. Despite
 everything that's happened, you
 once made children happy.

Randolph sits up and looks at Sheldon through watery eyes.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

RANDOLPH
Would you be my friend?

SHELDON
Sure.

RANDOLPH
(to Nora)
You too?

NORA
I guess.

RANDOLPH
Sorry about the brood mare stuff.

Randolph throws his arms around Sheldon and cries into his shoulder. Sheldon pats his back. He glances down at Randolph's gun and sees that it's a toy.

Nora pours vodka onto a small pillow she's taken from one of the chairs. She kneels next to Randolph and blots the gash on his head with the vodka soaked pillow. Randolph lets out a blood curdling scream.

INT. SHELDON'S FOYER - TIGHT ON REVOLVER - SHORT WHILE
LATER

being loaded.

WIDER

Sheldon loads his gun as Randolph is curled up on the couch like a little puppy. Nora hands him a cup of tea.

RANDOLPH
(a pitiful child)
Thank you.

She walks over to Sheldon.

NORA
(re: gun)
What are you doing?

Sheldon continues to load the gun.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

SHELDON

Just making the playing field even. I'm tired of running this race with one leg.

NORA

You're letting them drag you down to their level.

RANDOLPH

(from couch)

She's right, Sheldon. Don't make the same mistakes I did. Keep your dignity intact.

He accidentally spills some hot tea on himself.

RANDOLPH

Son-of-a-bitch!

SHELDON

I appreciate everyone's concern, but I can take care of myself.

Nora and Randolph look at each other.

RANDOLPH

(mouthing to Nora)

I tried.

Sheldon stuffs some extra bullets in his pocket.

SHELDON

(to Randolph)

Okay, buddy, we have to get down to the Garden. You're welcome to stay here as long as you like. Just don't leave until I get things squared away.

Randolph gets up and walks over to him.

RANDOLPH

Be careful, Sheldon. Remember what I told you -- you've only scratched the surface of this scummy business. You have yet to strike oil.

Randolph looks at him for a moment before turning to Nora.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

RANDOLPH
You're lucky to have a guy like
Smoochy.

NORA
You just rest, Randolph.

RANDOLPH
He's the real thing. Smoochy's the
real thing. And I've been a fraud.
A wicked man doing wicked acts.

Sheldon slaps the cylinder into place and tucks the gun
in his waistband.

SHELDON
Well, we all have our bad days.

He exits.

INT. HAWAII KAI - LATER THAT EVENING

A hula dancer performs on a tiny stage in the nightclub.
A small Hawaiian string band plays behind her. Burke
and a nervous-looking Stokes sit in a booth.

STOKES
Things are getting out of hand.
We have to cover our tracks.

BURKE
Relax, everything's gonna work
out.

STOKES
Relax? They found Merv Green's
head on the Grand Concourse!
Excuse my concern.

BURKE
Look, we can cover all the tracks
we want, but in the end we still
got the same problem. We gotta
finish what we started.

STOKES
God help us...

Stokes shakily takes a sip of his drink.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

BURKE

It'll all be over tonight.
Buggy's gonna take care of
everything.

STOKES

Buggy? Buggy Ding-Dong? The guy
who hosted 'Buggy's Bumpy
Railroad'?

STOKES

Yeah, until he discovered the joys
of Turkish black mule heroin. For
the right price he'll do anything.
It's amazing the guy's still alive.

Stokes buries his head in his hands.

STOKES

I don't know, Burke... this whole
thing...

A shadow falls across their table. Burke looks up.

BURKE

Speak of the devil. Have a seat,
Bug.

Buggy Ding-Dong's hand ENTERS the FRAME and snubs out his
Camel. Stokes looks up.

STOKES

(attempting to
sound cheerful)
Buggy. You're looking good.

ANGLE ON BUGGY

A man who looks like he would first kill you then eat you
for dinner, slides into the booth next to Stokes.

BURKE

It's time we put this thing to
rest, Frank. And the way I see
it... the rhino's up past his
bedtime.

Burke hands a folded envelope to Buggy who puts it into
his jacket pocket. He lights another Camel.

EXT. MADISON SQUARE GARDEN - AERIAL SHOT - EVENING

"SMOOCH ON ICE -- SOLD OUT!" flashes on the electronic marquee.

EXT. MADISON SQUARE GARDEN - ENTRANCE - CONTINUOUS ACTION

Men, women and children flood in through the turnstiles.

INT. MADISON SQUARE GARDEN - CONTINUOUS ACTION

Ushers, costumed as Rhinettes, help people to their seats. People mull about the concession stands which are adorned with signs that read: "Complimentary Apple Slices!" "Have a Salt-Free Pretzel!" "Enjoy a Soy Dog on Smoochy!" "Fresh Squeezed O.J. -- Have a Glass!" "Sugar Free Brownies -- They're Not as Bad as they Sound!" "Free! Everything is Free!" "Keep Your Wallet in Your Pocket!" "Friendship is More Important than Money!"

INT. ANGELO'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

Angelo's place looks like a cyclone hit it. Angelo works free from the ropes that have bound his wrists. He has been hit over the head and is groggy as he reaches for the phone.

INT. SHELDON'S PENTHOUSE - CONTINUOUS ACTION

A freshly showered Randolph is wearing Sheldon's robe and has a pink towel wrapped around his head as he lounges on the living room sofa. He's eating grapes and reading National Geographic. The PHONE RINGS. He picks it up.

RANDOLPH
(sing-songy)
Hellooo!

We GO TO a SPLIT-SCREEN with Angelo.

ANGELO
Randy, is that you?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

RANDOLPH

Yes, Angelo, my little Twinkie, shouldn't you be getting ready for the big show?

ANGELO

Listen, Buggy's been here.

RANDOLPH

Buggy Double D's? The Dong Man?

ANGELO

Yeah, he lifted my backstage pass and he's braggin' that he's doing some kind of job for Burke Bennett.

Randolph thinks. He suddenly looks very worried.

RANDOLPH

Sheldon's in trouble. I gotta get down to the Garden.

ANGELO

The place is crawling with cops. They'll jump on you like a trampoline.

RANDOLPH

I don't care.

He rips the towel from his head.

RANDOLPH

I have to warn the rhino.

INT. MADISON SQUARE GARDEN - BASEMENT

Buggy, in his ill-fitting Rhinette costume, emerges from the sub-basement carrying a thin suitcase. As far as anyone's concerned, he's just another usher. He heads for the stairwell.

INT. MADISON SQUARE GARDEN - CONTINUOUS ACTION

Every seat in the arena is occupied. The lights are lowered. A slow rolling TYMPANY is heard. After a moment, the Rhinettes skate out to enthusiastic applause.

BACKSTAGE

Sheldon, looking very intense, stands alone in the wings. He takes a couple of deep breaths. We TILT DOWN and see the bulge of the revolver under his Smoochy costume.

ICE RINK

The Rhinettes have formed a line across the middle of the rink.

ANNOUNCER (V.O.)

And now... it gives us great pleasure to introduce America's favorite rhino... ladies and gentlemen... boys and girls...

(dramatic pause)

Heeeeere's Smoochy!

Smoochy skates out to thunderous applause. The entire arena is on its feet. The Rhinettes part as Smoochy skates through them and stops in the middle of the rink. The applause and cheering don't stop for several moments. One of the Rhinettes hands Smoochy a microphone.

SMOOCHY

On behalf of myself, the Rhinettes, and the soon to be restored Coney Island Methadone Center, I thank you all for coming.

NETWORK BOX

Burke and Stokes roll their eyes.

BACK ON SHELDON

SMOOCHY

It was my original intention that tonight's performance would be a benign mix of Smoochy songs and ice dancing. But as an artist, I believe I must convey to you, my fans, what I'm feeling at any given moment in my life. To do otherwise would be dishonest. Art is communication. It's something we learn and hopefully grow from. With that in mind... I hope you enjoy the show.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

More applause as Smoochy skates over to the Rhinettes. They form a circle around him and slap hands in solidarity.

SHELDON

This is for Spinner.

The lights go down. A full orchestra begins to play the overture to WAGNER's Tristen et Isolde. The lights come up as a soprano -- a heavysset woman in a modified rhino costume -- skates out through the fog and begins singing the opera. Smoochy -- now wearing a peasant's frock -- skates an interpretive dance in the b.g. with a few Rhinettes who are also dressed as peasants. A beautiful fairy princess floats down (on filament wire) from the rafters and takes Smoochy's hand. She skates away with him as he waves good-bye to the Rhinettes.

HIGH ANGLE

LOOKING DOWN AT the opera. The CAMERA PANS OVER TO the catwalk high above the rink.

CATWALK

Buggy Ding-Dong, still in his Rhinette costume, settles into his assassin's roost. He begins to assemble the rifle and check the scope.

EXT. MADISON SQUARE GARDEN - FEW MINUTES LATER

Randolph emerges from a cab and runs through the crowd outside the Garden. A few people recognize him.

MAN

It's Rainbow Randolph! Someone stop him!

Randolph finds a side exit and slips into the arena.

INT. MADISON SQUARE GARDEN - FEW MINUTES LATER

The "Opera on Ice" continues. The soprano continues singing as Smoochy reenacts the incidents of his recent life. The fairy princess brings Smoochy to a room with a gleaming white desk. Smoochy takes a seat behind the desk. The fairy princess places a crown on his head, bids him good-bye, and floats away. Smoochy sits proudly in his new world.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Suddenly, Rhinettes dressed as devils glide in and skate in a circle around the desk. They throw money at Smoochy. He jumps up and skates away, but the Rhinette devils pursue him with daggers. The music from the orchestra intensifies as the drama plays out.

NETWORK BOX

Nora continues to watch the opera, totally entranced. Stokes and Burke look a little on edge. Burke glances at his watch.

CATWALK

Buggy finishes loading the rifle. He shines the barrel with his sleeve and looks through the scope as Smoochy and company continue to perform below.

POV THROUGH RIFLE SCOPE

Atmospheric fog created by the smoke machine is so thick that Buggy has difficulty FINDING Sheldon THROUGH the cross-hairs. Occasionally, Smoochy skates through a hole in the clouds only to disappear again. BUGGY CURSES in frustration.

ARENA

Randolph pushes his way past Garden security and runs toward the rink. Several cops working the event spot him. A few spectators scream in horror.

ICE RINK

The soprano's mournful aria reaches its crescendo as Smoochy is now pursued by Rhinettes dressed as Nazis. They hold signs with words like "SCANDAL" and "SHAME." Smoochy skates to a section of the rink resembling Chinatown where he lands over a fallen "Moochy." He cradles Moochy's head in his arms as the Nazis glide past him and disappear into the fog.

NETWORK BOX

Nora wipes a tear from her eye as she watches the tragedy play out. Burke and Stokes glance skyward. Nora notices this.

RINK'S EDGE

Randolph reaches the rink as cops push their way toward him.

RANDOLPH
Sheldon!!!

But Sheldon can't hear over the orchestra. The soprano hits a high note.

CATWALK

Buggy aims the rifle.

POV THROUGH RIFLE SCOPE

Smoochy glides THROUGH the cross-hairs followed by a Rhinette.

TIGHT ON BUGGY'S FINGER

as he quickly squeezes off a SHOT.

RINK

The MUFFLED sound of GUNSHOT is absorbed by the intense music. A wounded Rhinette falls to the ice, but no one notices. Smoochy, oblivious, continues to skate toward the "gates of heaven" with the angel Moochy. Giant white gates slowly swing open at the rink's far end as floating angels open their arms to welcome Moochy.

OUTER RINK

Randolph runs around the rink's perimeter, trying to get Sheldon's attention. Cops and security push their way towards Randolph. He suddenly notices the felled Rhinette on the ice and looks skyward. He can make out a rifle barrel protruding from the catwalk.

NETWORK BOX

Stokes and Burke notice a commotion in the audience. They now see Randolph running through the crowd on his way to the stairwell.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

STOKES
 (whispering to Burke)
 What's he doing here?! He's going
 to screw everything up!

Nora notices the distressed look on their faces and follows their gaze to the rafters. She now sees the rifle barrel.

ANGLE - NORA

jumps to her feet. FAST PUSH IN TO Nora's mouth.

NORA
 (screaming)
 Sheldon!!!

She starts to climb out of the box but Burke stops her.

BURKE
 Nora...

NORA
 You're in on this, aren't you!
 You sold him out! You fucking
 snake!

Stokes tries to put his arm around her.

STOKES
 Nora, please. It's not what you
 think. I'm grooming you. You're
 going to run the division one
 day...

She pushes him. He goes down hard. She starts to climb out of the box. Burke tries to grab her, but she spins around and punches him. She runs for the rink.

Stokes stands in the box looking dumbstruck as pandemonium plays out around him. People are running in all directions, cops are everywhere.

STOKES
 (frightened; to Burke)
 What now? What do we do now?!

BURKE
 Survival of the fittest!

Burke runs off through the panicked crowd. Stokes looks around and heads off in the opposite direction.

OUTSIDE RINK

Tommy and her boys notice the commotion in the audience. They see cops pursuing someone. They realize it's Randolph. Tommy, Jimmy and Sammy take off after him.

CATWALK

Buggy, in position again, looks through the rifle scope.

POV THROUGH RIFLE SCOPE

As the soprano reaches for an impossibly high note, the fog dissipates slightly and Smoochy's foam rubber head COMES perfectly INTO VIEW.

BUGGY

smiles.

RINK'S EDGE

Nora screams.

NORA

Sheldon!!! Get down!!!

CLOSE ON BUGGY'S FINGER

He's about to squeeze the trigger.

CATWALK

Randolph reaches the catwalk as the orchestra plays a dramatic series of smashing notes. He tackles Buggy just as he squeezes off the SHOT.

RINK

The top of Smoochy's foam rubber head is blown off. In SLOW MOTION, Smoochy's tattered horn sails through the air and lands softly on the ice.

WIDE

Everyone in the arena screams and heads for the exits. It's pandemonium. Thanks to Randolph, Buggy's shot was too high and just missed Sheldon's skull.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

A confused Sheldon bends over to pick up a chunk of the Smoochy head.

Nora, who's entered at the opposite end of the rink, tries to reach him, but it's impossible. Panicked audience members run across the rink, heading for the exits. It's chaos. People slip, Rhinettes get trampled.

CATWALK

Randolph tries to get the rifle away from Buggy. They struggle on a narrow beam high above the rink. The cops have reached the outer edge of the catwalk now. Tommy and the boys get there a second later. They all stand back -- the catwalk is too unstable.

RANDOLPH

Give me that gun, you fucking
wacked-out freak!

Buggy manages to shove Randolph off him. He raises the RIFLE and SHOOTS at the cops. Randolph grabs him. Both he and Buggy lose their footing and slip from the catwalk. Randolph is able to grab onto the edge and hold on. Buggy clutches Randolph's leg which threatens to bring them both down. They dangle 80 feet above the rink. Randolph desperately tries to hold onto the catwalk as Buggy clings to Randolph's ankle.

CLOSE ON RANDOLPH'S FINGERS

His knuckles turn white as his fingers start to slip from the beam.

ANGLE ON BUGGY

Still clutching Randolph's ankle, he starts to lose his grip. He desperately grabs Randolph's foot, but Randolph's shoe slips off and Buggy begins his long plunge to the next life.

INT. RINK - HIGH OVERHEAD SHOT

Buggy screams the whole way down, still holding onto Randolph's shoe.

RINK

Buggy crashes into the middle of the rink, cob-webbing the ice around him.

CATWALK

Tommy and his boys runs off to find Sheldon. The COPS help Randolph off the catwalk. He's a nervous wreck.

COP #1
You okay?

RANDOLPH
I don't know. I'm kind of fucked up in general, so it's hard to gauge.

They pat the dazed Randolph on the back. He passes out.

RINK

People continue to run through the rink. Felled Rhinettes litter the ice like broken dolls. Smoke fills the air. Sheldon is helping a random woman to her feet as Nora finally reaches him. She embraces him.

NORA
Burke's with Stokes. He's been in it all along.

Sheldon looks toward the network box. Beyond it, through the smoke, he sees Burke shoving his way through people who jam the exit trying to escape. Sheldon reaches into his costume and pulls out his gun.

NORA
No, Sheldon, don't!

Sheldon runs off leaving Nora.

EXIT

Burke is almost through the cluster of people. He glances over his shoulder and sees Sheldon heading toward him. He shoves even harder now and finally gets through.

EXT. MADISON SQUARE GARDEN - CONTINUOUS ACTION

Burke makes a run for it down 33rd Street. A moment later, Sheldon emerges from the building. He sees Burke in the distance and takes off after him. He's still in his skates and wearing the partially-blown-off Smoochy head.

FURTHER DOWN STREET

Burke looks behind and sees the nightmarish image of a disfigured Smoochy chasing after him. He quickly rounds the corner.

EXT. STREET

A few moments later Sheldon rounds the corner. He looks down the street and sees no sign of Burke. He notices an alley by an abandoned building.

EXT. ALLEY - CONTINUOUS ACTION

Sheldon walks slowly into the alley, gun drawn. Suddenly, Burke jumps out from behind some boxes. He whacks Sheldon's head with a garbage can lid. The gun goes flying. Burke goes for it, but Sheldon is quickly on his feet and pounces on him. The two men fight it out. Burke manages to get on top of Sheldon and starts to strangle him.

BURKE

You fucking point a gun at me? A gun I gave you as a gift?! Where's your fucking etiquette?

Just as Sheldon begins to lose consciousness, we hear a GUNSHOT. Burke looks up. Nora stands there, pointing Sheldon's gun directly at him.

NORA

Let him go.

Burke just looks at her.

NORA

Now. Before I pump one in that Grecian Formula scalp of yours.

Burke smirks as he releases Sheldon. Sheldon jumps up and takes the gun from Nora. He shakily points it at Burke.

BURKE

You know something, kid? You've turned out to be an incredible pain in the ass.

Burke slowly stands up, brushing off his suit.

SHELDON

You were behind the Spinner hit, weren't you?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

BURKE

That was a tragic mistake.
 (shakes head sadly)
 If only one could turn back time...
 (beat)
 But what the hell, it's just one
 less mick in the world.

He laughs.

NORA

You son-of-a-bitch.

Sheldon cocks the gun.

BURKE

Oh my. What are you gonna do?
 Kill me? That wouldn't be very
 Smoochy-like behavior.

SHELDON

You're right. There's just one
 thing...

Sheldon tears off the remains of his tattered costume and
 steps out of it.

SHELDON

I'm not Smoochy.

Sheldon is shaking as he extends the gun to Burke's head.

SHELDON

I finally realized we're living in
 a different jungle.

Burke suddenly looks fearful, as does Nora.

NORA

No, Sheldon.

Sheldon closes his eyes as he tries to summon up the
 courage to pull the trigger.

NORA

Sheldon!

Suddenly, there's a voice from behind.

VOICE (O.S.)

Don't do it, Shel.

Sheldon turns around. It's Tommy and her boys.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

SHELDON

(sternly)

Stay out of it, Tommy. This is my business.

Tommy walks closer to Sheldon.

TOMMY

No more killin', Shel. Enough's enough. Don't destroy who you are for this piece of shit. You mean something to the kids. Don't take Smoochy away from the kids.

Tommy extends her hand for the gun. Sheldon looks down at the gun. He can't believe he's even holding it. He hands it to Tommy.

SHELDON

I don't know how I got pushed this far.

TOMMY

You're only human, Shel. The important thing is... you never went over the cliff. You're a good boy. For some of us... it's too late.

Tommy pats Sheldon's shoulder affectionately.

TOMMY

We'll take it from here, kid, you run along with your girl. Get on with your life.

Sheldon looks over at Burke, who's petrified.

SHELDON

Tommy, you're not going to --

TOMMY

Don't worry. Sometimes even a rat deserves a little mercy.

Sheldon and Nora take a final look at Burke before walking out of the alley. Burke is wide-eyed with fear as Tommy's boys advance on him. Just as they round the corner there is the sound of TWO GUNSHOTS. Sheldon looks at Nora.

NORA

Bus backfire.

She pats him on the back.

EXT. MADISON SQUARE GARDEN - CONTINUOUS ACTION

Stokes finally makes it out of the arena. He runs toward his waiting limo and hops in the back seat. He barks to his driver through the glass partition.

STOKES
Get out of here!

The car doesn't move. Stokes pounds on the partition.

STOKES
Move this thing!

No response. Stokes frantically pushes the button that lowers the partition. It slides down.

STOKES
Are you deaf?! I said --

The driver turns around. Stokes recoils in horror. It's Takashi. He smiles as the back doors open and the Japanese thugs -- Chick, Sambo and Tobi -- pile in with Stokes. They slam the doors shut.

CHICK
I wish I could tell you it'll be quick and painless, Frank, but you know how these things go...

Stokes lets out a small whimper. Chick nods to Takashi who steps on the gas as he sings "Anything Goes" in Japanese.

EXT. TH AVENUE - CONTINUOUS ACTION

The car heads into the night, passing Sheldon and Nora, who have exited the alley. This will be Frank Stokes' final limo ride.

EXT. STREET - CONTINUOUS ACTION

Sheldon and Nora pause on the street. Sheldon looks around him.

SHELDON
You know, a little grime here and there doesn't change the fact... it's still a beautiful city.

He looks at Nora.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

NORA
Let's go home, Smoochy. Show's
over.

Sheldon gazes back at her.

SHELDON
No it's not. It's just beginning.

They kiss passionately as MUSIC SWELLS and the CAMERA
CRANES HIGH ABOVE the rink.

FADE OUT.

FADE UP ON:

INT. MADISON SQUARE GARDEN - ONE YEAR LATER

SUPERIMPOSE: ONE YEAR LATER

The Garden is sold out. The lights go down. Through the
P.A. we hear...

ANNOUNCER (V.O.)
And now... it gives us great
pleasure to introduce America's
favorite rhino... ladies and
gentlemen... boys and girls...

There's a dramatic pause; TYMPANY ROLL.

ANNOUNCER (V.O.)
Heeeeeere's Smoochy!

Smoochy skates out to thunderous applause.

ANNOUNCER (V.O.)
With his partner and comrade...
the one, the only... Rainbow
Randolph!

Randolph skates out, somewhat shakily, to huge applause.
Sheldon puts his arm around him. The audience is now on
their feet. Randolph especially basks in the adulation.

ANNOUNCER (V.O.)
All proceeds from tonight's
performance, will benefit the
Rainbow Randolph Center for
Alcoholism and Delusional
Behavior.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Sheldon pats Randolph on the back. MUSIC BEGINS as Rhinettes and Krinkle Kids skate out. The show starts and the audience goes wild. Nora smiles from the stands as Smoochy and the others glide across the ice. (SMOOCHY /RANDOLPH DUET TO COME.)

FADE OUT.

THE END