

FADE IN:

EXT. - RURAL SOUTH CAROLINA - DAY (CIRCA 1985)

SOUNDS OF SEA GULLS AND TUMBLING SURF.

A dream-like overexposed brightness gradually becomes the obscure lines of JACK NEWMAN'S face. Wearing sunglasses and a reversed baseball cap, he stares into the camera without expression. The face is handsome but not pretty, a 40ish face that's been around the block.

The camera PULLS BACK TO REVEAL that Jack's holding metal suntan reflectors which frame and illuminate his face. We hear the BLAST of a factory/industrial HORN.

RANDY (O.S.)
Surf's up, Jack.

Jack, seated in a beach chair, presses a button on the jam box beside him--abruptly ending the sounds of surf and gulls. He gathers his lotion, shirt, and chair. The pimply faced young guard, RANDY, looks on.

This is a minimum security prison. Jack starts inside.

RANDY (CONT'D)
You are the suntanningest devil I ever saw, Jack. I don't get it.

Jack lifts his sun glasses; He's right in the guard's face now.

JACK
When was the last time you got laid, Randy?

The kid's face spells virginity

JACK (CONT.)
Too white. You're just too white, man.

RANDY
(sarcastically)
Funny, Jack. That's really funny.

INT. - PRISON MESS HALL

Inmates seated at long tables eat peaceably. Jack inspects his domain. HARLAND, a grandfatherly guard, gives Jack a nod and a smile.

HARLAND
Won't be the same without you, Jack.

JACK
Thank you, Harland.

Jack begins his rounds; Randy trails like a puppy.

RANDY

What's the secret, Jack?

Jack collects gambling winnings from inmates in his upturned baseball cap.

JACK

Play your cards right, kid, I'll give you a number, okay? Change your life.

RANDY

Not again, Jack.

JACK

(to inmates)

Okay, fellas, it's Jackie the Geek, come to collect.

Jack steps up to INMATE #1.

INMATE #1

(putting money in the cap)

Nice tan, Jack. What's the line on the Braves game?

JACK

Thanks, Hawk. You'll know when I get the word.

RANDY

That trick you played on me, Jack, that wasn't funny. You said go to Blue street. You said there would be...you know...women there.

JACK

Great advice, huh?

Jack smiles and exchanges a soul shake with INMATE #2.

INMATE #2

Where'd you cop 'dem bad shades, Jack-ma-man?

JACK

I'll get you a pair, Rooster. On the house.

INMATE #2

(referring to money in Jack's cap)

I figure I done bought 'bout a dozen pair.

RANDY

This hooker gives me a price for some manual action, and it's a week's pay, Jack. And I say, "What?!" and the hooker says, "See that Mercedes? That's how good I am." So I think, *Damn!* So I pay up.

JACK

Good, huh?

RANDY

Good enough. I wanted something more, you know.

JACK

(looking for his next collection; spots him)

Then why are you so pissed off.

RANDY

I'm trying to tell you, Jack. See, the hooker offers some, you know, oral action, which is gonna cost me *two weeks' pay*, then points at the McDonald's across the street and says, "I own that."

JACK

And was it worth two weeks' pay?

INMATE #3 gives Jack a nasty, accusing look.

INMATE #3

(reluctantly paying)

Asshole.

RANDY

I'm trying to tell you, Jack. So I ask for, you know, the real thing and the hooker says it's gonna cost me a *month's* pay.

INMATE #4 is looking for a place to hide. Jack spots him.

JACK

(to disappear the kid)

I'll give you a number, change your life, kid.

RANDY

I say, "A month's pay! No way," and the hooker points at the hotel down the block. I go, "You don't own that hotel," and the hooker says, "If I had a pussy I would."

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INMATE #4 Looks like a trapped rat. Jack zeros in on him.

TRACKING:

RANDY (CONT'D)
(hustling to keep up)
That wasn't funny, Jack. Not one bit.
I'm gonna get you back for that one,
Jack.

Jack glances down at the serial number of a mess hall coffee machine.

JACK
Ready for that number?

RANDY
(reaching for a pad in his
pocket)
No way, Jack. Not again.

JACK
734-1616.

Inmate #4 cowers. Jack looms over him. Randy scurries away, pen and pad in hand.

INMATE #4
Look, uh, Jack. I came up a little
short, man.

JACK
You got no imagination, Slug.

INMATE #4
But I got a goin' away present for you.
Something special. Be waitin' for you
when you walk out of here, Jack.

JACK
Pay up, worm.

Inmate #4 moves closer, conspiratorially, reaches into his shirt pocket, hands over photos to Jack.

INMATE #4
They ship 'em in from Thailand by the
crate load. I'll git-chi one, Jack.

Jack's face shows no emotion.

INMATE #4 (CONT'D)
Looky here. Sex slave, Jack. This
honeypot can't be more 'n eight years
old, huh?

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Jack goes Medieval on him, taking the guy apart.

HARLAND

Jack! No!

Harland and Randy pry Jack from the bleeding inmate.

RANDY

Hard time, Jack! This is gonna get you hard time!

HARLAND

Oh, Jack. You ain't never gonna see your kids again.

CUT TO:

EXT. - PRISON YARD - DAY

Shackled at the wrists and ankles, Jack and a line of prisoners cross the prison yard toward an awaiting bus. He glances up to see CECILE, his wife, standing with her fingers through the chain link fence. Jack turns to Harland, the bus driver.

JACK

Harland...

Jack nods in Cecile's direction; Harland gives him the okay.

CECILE

I hear you're changing addresses, Jack.

JACK

New trial. County jail. Temporary. It's what we have in place of Disney World.

CECILE

You mean *another* trial.

JACK

Let me guess. You got two things for me: A hacksaw and a change of heart.

CECILE

I'm leaving the country, Jack.

JACK

Going to "find yourself"--again?

CECILE

No, Jack.

JACK

Second honeymoon, already?

CECILE

I'm taking the children to Miami. Then
to London. Permanently.

The bus horn blows.

JACK
No way. I'm their father.

CECILE
It's not as if they'll even know you, by
the time you get out.

JACK
You're not taking my kids from me. Not
again!

CECILE
You can never be their father.

JACK
They are *my* kids!

CECILE
Not any more, Jack.

Cecile turns and walks away, leaving Jack clinging to the wire
fence.

INT. - THE PRISON BUS

Jack looks down...

EXT. - CECILE'S CAR

... as it passes the bus, into the upturned faces of his
children, KIM, six, and RUSTY, four. We follow the Florida tags
as the car speeds away.

CUT TO:

EXT. - COUNTY JAIL - DAY

Jack is the last prisoner to step off the bus. Harland stands
waiting for him. Jack extends his hand to say goodbye. Harland
puts a pint of whiskey in his hand.

HARLAND
(referring to the whiskey)
It's no substitute for good luck. Best I
can do, Jack.

INT. - COUNTY JAIL CELL - DAY

Dressed in an orange jumpsuit, Jack paces inside his cell.
Behind him, an unidentifiable cellmate lies covered on his bunk,
apparently sleeping. Jack hears footsteps.

The empty whiskey bottle lies at the cellmate's hand. Jack takes it.

JACK
I owe you, pal.

Jack stuffs the empty bottle under his mattress. A stern young woman, clearly the PUBLIC DEFENDER, accompanied by a DEPUTY, walk briskly toward Jack's cell. They stop before Jack. The deputy unlocks the door and hands Jack a roll of clothes. The Public Defender doesn't look up from her notes.

PUBLIC DEFENDER
Put these on.

ON JACK

No privacy. Jack looks around like a schoolboy caught with his pants down. The Public Defender is clinical.

PUBLIC DEFENDER (CONT'D)
This is the deal. You'll plead. You'll get time served. You'll walk. Got it?

Jack has his back to her, pulling up his trousers.

PUBLIC DEFENDER (CONT'D)
Do you have any *questions*, Roosevelt?

Jack turns. His expression says, Oh, you mean *me*?

INT. - COURTROOM

The JUDGE fumbles through papers. Nervously surveying the courtroom, Jack looks like he has itch he can't scratch.

He spots Randy guarding the courtroom door. Jack's hand goes up to his face.

JACK
Oh, Jesus!

JUDGE
(reading)
Joe Roosevelt Lewis, you have been charged with drunk and disorderly conduct. How do you plead?

JACK
Guilty, Your Honor.

Randy's face squinches up; his body inflates.

JUDGE
Would you speak up, Mr. Lewis?

JACK
Guilty, Your Honor.

Jack's squirming now. Randy's lips form the word: Jack?

ON JACK

JUDGE (O.S.)
The court accepts your plea of guilty,
Mr. Lewis.

Randy swaggers toward the front of the courtroom. Jack sweats.

JUDGE (CONT'D)
The court sentences you to time served.
Anything else, Mr. Lewis?

Randy stations himself at the door to the Judge's chambers, beside the court STENOGRAPHER, who is a dead ringer for Olive Oyl. Randy crosses his arms over his chest, rears back on his heels.

JACK
I don't have any transportation, Your
Honor. May I make a telephone call?

JUDGE
(pointing to his chambers)
Use mine.
(beat)
Okay, who's next?

Averting the kid's eyes, Jack starts for the chamber's door. Randy blocks his way. His and Randy's eyes meet. A visual moment of man-to-man here. Then: the kid's face transforms into a cocky smile. The smiling face of Olive Oyl tilts up to Randy, then blushes apple red.

RANDY
(whispers)
Thanks, Jack.

INT. - JUDGE'S CHAMBERS

Jack's finger dials 911.

JACK
I'd like to report a fire.

EXT. - FIRE STATION

A spinning red light. Fire trucks, one after another, explode from the bay doors.

EXT. - COURTHOUSE

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The Judge, Randy, the Stenographer, and the Public Defender, all hang out the second story court window like mental patients watching the fire trucks across the street race away. Then, as if choreographed, they sway from the windows simultaneously.

EXT. - FIRE STATION

Finally an old water truck chugs from the station. Jack sits on the bumper of the water truck as it rolls out of town.

CUT TO:

EXT. - INTERSTATE TRUCK STOP - DAY

Standing outside a truck stop on I-95 sipping a soda, Jack loosens his tie and watches as cars pull up to the gas islands. Behind him at a distance the fire chief shakes his head and the truck stop operator shrugs as the fire trucks slowly file away.

The tinkle of car keys draws Jack's attention to a 1970 EL DORADO at the islands. The car looks like an aircraft carrier. Jack freezes, slowly lowers the soft drink can. The hook-nosed driver, EARL QUICK, slinks past him and inside to pay.

INT. - THE EL DORADO

Jack is behind the wheel, racing onto I-95 in the El Dorado.

EXT. - TRUCK STOP

Earl realizes the car has been stolen. His look says he's a killer.

INT. - THE CAR

Jack races on, urgency in every move. He digs between the seats, opens the glove compartment, feels beneath his seat. He pulls down the visor, finding only a AAA travel card, which he thrusts into his shirt pocket.

EXT. - INTERSTATE 95 - LATE AFTERNOON

The sign says WELCOME TO THE SUNSHINE STATE.

EXT. - PARKING LOT - TWILIGHT

Dusk. Jack stands before the headlights of the car, parked at the very back of a Holiday Inn lot. He alertly scans about, inserting the trunk key, careful not to let the trunk lid open far enough to trigger the light, and reaches inside.

INSERT - TRUNK

Jack's hand feels around until it finds a tire iron. Inches from his fingers are a WOMAN'S BOUND FEET. He closes the trunk.

BACK TO SCENE

One bulbous headlight stares at us like a Cyclops. BOOM! The light explodes. The second headlight: BOOM!

GROUND LEVEL:

Jack's hand places the tire iron underneath the car.

INT. - THE HOTEL LOBBY

Inside a telephone booth in the lobby, Jack holds the phone to his ear.

VOICE ON PHONE

We can't be held responsible for articles left in the car. Authorization for your room has been approved, thank you for choosing Triple-A.

EXT. - PARKING LOT

REVERSE ANGLE:

From inside, the trunk slowly rises and Jack's body materializes. ELAINE FOSTER, late-twenties, arrestingly beautiful in a hip-punk way, is blindfolded, bound and gagged.

JACK

(tire iron falls from his hand)
Jesus!

He attempts to removes the gag; Elaine tries to bite him.

JACK (CONT'D)

It's okay.

When he attempts to remove her blindfold, Elaine again tries to bite him.

JACK (CONT'D)

(reacting to her stunning beauty)
Whew! I'm going to, ah, untie your feet now.

EXT. - PARKING LOT

Jack lifts her from the trunk. This is a sexual act, by a man who hasn't had any for a while. Elaine's hands are bound against her abundant chest. He looks at her breasts and sighs. He must be nimble not to touch.

JACK (CONT'D)

The name is Jack. Jack Newman.

Free, Elaine removes the gag and pulls away the blindfold.

She kicks him in the balls. Jack folds. She snatches an oversize bag from the trunk, SLAMS it into his jaw, buckling Jack's knees, then bolts into the night. Jack staggers to his feet in bewildered agony.

ANOTHER ANGLE:

At a safe distance, Elaine pauses to find her bearings, turns and looks back at Jack.

TINKLING MUSIC BOX PLAYS "SOMEWHERE OVER THE RAINBOW."

CLOSE UP:

A look of wild wonder appears on Elaine's face, as if she's witnessed an apparition so powerful that it takes away her breath.