

FADE IN:

EXT. DOWDY HISTORICAL SOCIETY - NIGHT

A small but stately colonial era building befitting the home of a small town museum.

CLOSE ON

Flames creep across a plaque- "Established 1794".

INSIDE

Behind a velvet rope, an early 1800's American bedroom display is engulfed in flames. The wax mannequin of a black female servant melts.

In the foreground- a sign reads "THOMAS JEFFERSON SLEPT HERE".

INT. DOWDY TOWN HALL- AUDITORIUM- THE NEXT NIGHT

THE MAYOR, double chin bulging over the buttoned collar of his shirt, addresses the standing room only crowd.

THE MAYOR

Friends, neighbors, citizens of Dowdy...  
I'm sorry that we have had to gather  
under such terrible circumstances. The  
Historical Society has been completely  
destroyed. We've lost everything.

The crowd reacts restlessly, visibly upset. Individuals begin to stand to speak out.

CITIZEN #1

Everything?

THE MAYOR

Everything.

CITIZEN #2

The original town charter?

THE MAYOR

Gone.

CITIZEN #3

Martha Dowdy's handwritten diary?

THE MAYOR

History.

CITIZEN #4

The colonial marital aid collection?

THE MAYOR

Well luckily Ms. Fillmore was doing some restoration work at home and was able to save those particular items. We all owe her a debt of gratitude.

The crowd applauds. MS. Fillmore, an old spinster, stands and nods to the crowd.

MS. FILLMORE

It was my pleasure.

THE MAYOR

The real issue at hand is the need to reinstate a Volunteer Fire Department.

The crowd breaks out in applause.

THE MAYOR (CONT'D)

Our cherished heritage could have been saved if we had been able to deal with this emergency ourselves.

The cheers and applause grow louder.

THE MAYOR (CONT'D)

So who would like the honor of being the first volunteer?

The hall is immediately silent. The townspeople sit stone faced.

We hear CRICKETS.

EXT. DOWDY ORPHANAGE - NIGHT

A rundown, two story boarding house. In the foreground a sign reads- "HOME FOR UNWANTED CHILDREN".

A Molotov cocktail flies through the air and smashes through the a second story window. The flames spread quickly from window to window.

EXT. DOWDY LIBRARY - NIGHT

The Library is engulfed in flames. Patrons run in terror. MRS. HENDERSON, the librarian, runs from the building clutching as many books as she can carry.

MRS. HENDERSON

Fire! Fire! My books! Please help me save the books!

An ULTRA CONSERVATIVE MAN grabs the books from her and tosses them back into the library, now a raging inferno.

ULTRA CONSERVATIVE MAN  
Let them burn! Let them all burn!

INT. DOWDY TOWN HALL - NIGHT

The auditorium is only half filled now. The Mayor addresses them from the podium on the stage.

THE MAYOR  
Volunteers.....anyone?

The crowd stares blankly. Once again, We hear CRICKETS.

EXT. MAIN STREET - NIGHT

The shops are closed... the streets deserted. The CRICKETS grow louder.

EXT. BIRD'S EYE VIEW OF THE TOWN OF DOWDY- NIGHT

Small fires ring the town. The CRICKETS are deafening.

FADE TO BLACK

EXT. MISS ALICIA'S CUPCAKE FACTORY - NIGHT

A storefront bakery decorated with images of cupcakes and cookies sits next door to CRAZY WILLIE'S 24 HOUR LIQUOR AND GUN SHOP.

A neon sign flashes in the window, alternating between "Desserts and Hores Derves" and "WHores".

INT. MISS ALICIA'S - NIGHT

A few stale cakes and pastries rest on the mostly empty shelves of the darkened store.

IN THE BACK ROOM

LINGERIE CLAD WOMEN lounge in a room decorated with Victorian furniture, gold carpet and red velvet wall covering.

Upstairs, in private rooms, the women entertain their clients.

IN ONE ROOM

FRANK UMM, naked and bound in leather restraints, hangs upside down from the ceiling. A DOMINATRIX whips him playfully.

IN ANOTHER ROOM

COACH BARRY RAY, fifties and balding with a rock solid physique, dressed in a blue polyester workout suit lies in bed making out with TWO CHEERLEADERS.

BARRY  
Gimme a 'B'.

CHEERLEADERS  
Bee!

BARRY  
Gimme a 'J'.

CHEERLEADERS  
Jay!

IN YET ANOTHER ROOM

ANGELO TIPIO, in boxer shorts, a wife-beater T-shirt and black socks approaches the bed where two WOMEN in lingerie are waiting.

ANGELO  
Not for nuthin' but I wanna see you  
chicks do each other first.

AND ANOTHER ROOM

STEVEN, a young clean cut 18 year old, makes out with the GIRL NEXT DOOR.

STEVEN  
(frustrated)  
What do you mean, third base!

PROSTITUTE  
You're the one who wanted a discount!

IN THE MAIN SUITE

GEORGE LINDY dances a waltz with MISS ALICIA. Several moves in to their routine, George steps on Miss Alicia's toes.

GEORGE  
I'm sorry.

MISS ALICIA  
Don't worry dahling.

GEORGE  
This is never gonna work.

MISS ALICIA

A few more nights with me and you will be putting Gene Kelly to shame. Your wife will be very impressed.

GEORGE

I want, I mean, I want our anniversary to be special.

MISS ALICIA

It will be George because you are special. Your wife is a lucky woman.

OFFSCREEN VOICE

(distant and muffled)

Fire! Fire!

MISS ALICIA

Yes fire, her loins will burn with desire. "Put out this fire" she will beg.

OFFSCREEN VOICE

Fire!

GEORGE

Fire!

MISS ALICIA

Fire!

INT. MISS ALICIA'S CUPCAKE FACTORY- HALLWAY- NIGHT

The warehouse is in chaos. Smoke billows through the hallway. Patrons criss cross the screen in panic, rushing through the hallway looking for an escape.

An ARAB SHEIK runs in circles screaming.

A 300 POUND WOMAN in a bikini struggles to pull a donkey along.

And a MAN dressed as Jesus Christ in garters drags a cross that he is tied to.

EXT. MISS ALICIA'S CUPCAKE FACTORY- NIGHT

A crowd watches the Cupcake Factory burn from across the street. Frank, Angelo, Barry, George and Steven, stand in a line, their faces illuminated by the flames from the fire.

FRANK UMM

It's outrageous.

ANGELO  
A Greek tragedy.

BARRY RAY  
A right wing conspiracy.

GEORGE  
Somebody oughta do something!

STEVEN  
(raising his fist in the black  
pride salute)  
No justice, no peace.

Moving in close on George, we see his determination and resolve.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. DOWDY VOLUNTEER FIREHOUSE- DAY

From close on George, we pull back to reveal Frank, Angelo, Barry, George and Steven, lined up as before, looking at the firehouse. It's boarded up and run down from years of neglect. The crew looks snazzy in their new uniforms.

MONTAGE

Music starts- maybe the Village People's "Fireman".

INT./EXT. FIREHOUSE- DAY

Shafts of sunlight cut through the darkness as more and more boards are pulled from the windows.

George and Steven wash the fire truck which turns from brown to bright red.

Frank slides down the fire pole. As he reaches the bottom, Barry follows, landing on top of Frank.

Angelo hangs up Bikini Girl calendar as Steven passes by, carrying a fire extinguisher. By reflex, Steven lets out a blast from the extinguisher.

George waves on the firetruck as it backs up toward the double garage, one door open, one door closed. The truck races backwards, smashing through the closed garage door.

In the kitchen, Angelo stirs a pot of sauce, tasting it with a long wooden spoon. He kisses the tips of his fingers.

George, holding a pointer, stands before a chalkboard on which is written:

FIRE PREVENTION - FIRE FIGHTING - FIRE INVESTIGATION

Barry, Frank, Steve and Angelo sit before him taking notes in their undersized elementary school style chair/desks.

In the bathroom, Frank, decked out in a pink bathrobe and fluffy bunny slippers heads into the communal shower. A second later, George, Barry, Angelo and Steven race out, soaking wet and clutching their towels.

One after the other, each one, in full gear, slides down the fire pole and jump onto the truck as it races out of the firehouse.

END OF MONTAGE

INT. DOWDY HIGH SCHOOL- CLASSROOM- DAY

Frank Umm, in his dress fireman uniform, addresses a motley class of juvenile delinquents.

TEACHER

Children, let's give Mr. Umm a warm welcome. Hello Mr. Umm.

STUDENTS

(in unison)  
Hello Mr. Shithead!

TEACHER

(resigned)  
Well at least that was all together.

SINGLE STUDENT

Hello Mr. Shithead!

TEACHER

Yes, thank you Johnny. Mr. Umm is here to talk about fire prevention and safety.

FRANK UMM

(reading from a card)  
Fire can be your friend. Fire can also be your enemy. Take gasoline for example-

Frank raises a gas can.

A student flicks a match stick with his thumb igniting the head.

EXT. DOWDY HIGH SCHOOL- DAY

The second floor windows of the three story school blow out in a fiery explosion.

EXT. THIRD STREET- DAY

The bad part of town- all one block of it.

Steven patrols in uniform. A black Cadillac sits in front of a fire hydrant. He slaps an orange "ILLEGALLY PARKED" sticker on the driver side window.

His eyes widen from the surge of authority... power.

Overtaken by a frenzy of new found power, Steven circles the car slapping stickers on the windshield, the windows, the hood, the roof. He kicks out the headlights and pauses.

Steven stumbles backward, out of breath.

Steven turns to see TWO MAFIOSO towering over him.

STEVEN  
(stammering)  
You, uh, were parked, uh, a hydrant....

MAFIOSO  
Weez needed a wrench.

Steven looks around the goons to the Plumbing Supply shop behind them.

The Mafioso drag Steven into he store. The slide of a semi-automatic is heard being racked.

ANGELO (O.S.)  
Whoa! Hold on minute! I know dis' guy!

Angelo and Steven exit the shop.

ANGELO (CONT'D)  
Not for nuthin', but next time you wanna sticker one of my cousins cars, don't!

INT. DOWDY CHURCH- DAY

REVEREND CLARENCE "SUGAR" WASHINGTON, short, thin and black, delivers his noon sermon to his white congregation.

REVEREND  
...and Jesus said to Moses "Let the good peoples who provide for my disciples get on the express line to heaven... and those who don't will live in the fiery hell of eternal damnation". Now my associates Peter, Paul and Mary will bring around the collection plates."



PETER, a pro-wrestling reject, PAUL, a Methadone poster boy and MARY, a bleach blonde stripper move through the crowd with collection baskets.

REVEREND (CONT'D)

Please be generous. God is watchin'.  
And Mrs. Wilson, don't fo-get to double  
up since you came up short last week.

Meek MRS. WILSON shrinks down in her seat, embarrassed.

A young, blonde haired, angelic ALTAR BOY runs up the center aisle and right to the Reverend's side.

ALTAR BOY

Reverend! Reverend!

REVEREND

What'd I tell you 'bout money time boy.

ALTAR BOY

But sir, Sheriff Dillon is towing your  
car again.

REVEREND

(shouting)  
MUTHAFUCKA!

EXT. DOWDY CHURCH- DAY

Reverend Washington races from the church and out to the curb just as his pink 1972 Lincoln is towed away.

REVEREND

(shouting)  
You're gonna be judged, you godless  
cretin.

GEORGE (O.S.)

Reverend! Reverend excuse me.

The Reverend, hears George and rushes back towards the church.

George follows and catches up to him at the entrance.

GEORGE (CONT'D)

Reverend, just a moment please.

REVEREND

I don't know what you talkin' bout.

GEORGE

Talking' bout?

REVEREND  
I didn't do it.

GEORGE  
Do what?

REVEREND  
What you talkin' 'bout.

GEORGE  
I'm not talkin' 'bout nuthin'.

REVEREND  
Then I guess you'll be goin'.

GEORGE  
I'm not sure what's going on but I'm here  
to inspect for fire code violations.

REVEREND  
Fire! I don't see no fire! You see a  
fire?

GEORGE  
Of course not.

The Reverend slams the heavy Church door closed. The Church  
bells begin to bong.

George knocks on the door and the Reverend opens it a crack.

GEORGE (CONT'D)  
I need to inspect-

REVEREND  
Hear them bells? They're tollin' for  
thee- Church is closed for the day.

The door is once again slammed in George's face.

EXT. DOWDY ELEMENTARY SCHOOL- DAY

The school burns. Frank drags a thick firehose up to a  
window as flames lash out.

Following the hose back to its source, we find George at the  
firetruck just as he turns the valve on.

A powerful stream of water engorges the hose as it bucks  
violently.

The hose flips Frank around like a ragdoll.

SCHOOL CHILDREN watch from across the street. They scatter as a geyser from Frank's hose approaches. One sweet little BLACK GIRL is left standing alone.

The blast of water hits the black girl head on and she is washed down the street.

DOWN THE STREET

A local NEWS CREW films the action.

JESSICA JOHNSON, the local field reporter, steps before the camera.

JESSICA JOHNSON

Oh, the humanity. The brutality. It is impossible to describe the human suffering being experienced today in Dowdy. Fifty years of civil rights washed away by the hoses of the Dowdy Fire Department. (Suddenly perky) Now back to you Chuck for sports and weather.

MONTAGE OF PEOPLE WATCHING NEWS PROGRAMS

Over an over, viewers around the country watch the girl being blasted by the hose.

MONTAGE OF NEWSPAPER PRESSES

Front pages roll off the presses-

The Daily Reporter- "DOWDY CALLS KING'S DREAM A NIGHTMARE",

KKK Times- "MAN OF THE YEAR" (with picture of George Lindy).

INT. DOWDY TOWN HALL- NIGHT

The hall is packed with townspeople, more of a mob than a meeting. The Mayor slams his gavel on the podium trying to get everyone's attention.

THE MAYOR

People please! People I must have your attention.

The crowd quiets down.

THE MAYOR (CONT'D)

Ladies and gentlemen, this is a sad day in the history of Dowdy. I think I speak for all of us when I say that we want the world to know that Dowdy is not a racist town.

The crowd bursts out in applause.

THE MAYOR (CONT'D)  
 (gesturing behind him)  
 Why I even have minorities on my staff.

An OLD BLACK MAN in a janitor's uniform stands up.

JANITOR  
 Yes suh, mista mayuh.

MAN IN CROWD  
 My best friend knows a black person!

OLD LADY #1  
 And I'm in Oprah's book club!

OLD LADY #2  
 A black man invented peanut butter, you know!

THE MAYOR  
 And we all love peanut butter, now don't we.

The crowd applauds again.

THE MAYOR (CONT'D)  
 I move to make peanut butter the official peanut by-product of Dowdy. All in favor say aye.

EVERYONE  
 Aye!

THE MAYOR  
 Well that should settle it. If that doesn't prove that Dowdy is committed to affirmative action then nothing will.

The crowd applauds again.

Reverend Washington rushes to the stage and pushes The Mayor away from his microphone. Peter, Paul and Mary follow behind.

REVEREND  
 You must be crazy! This ain't no promised land unless you a white man in Alabama wearin' your bed sheet to work. I'm callin' on the brothers and sisters of Dowdy to boycott the white racist businesses of this town.

The entire audience turns to look at a BLACK COUPLE, the two black residents of Dowdy, sitting in the audience.

The EXECUTIVE COUNCIL MEMBERS talk among themselves each counting off two fingers and shrugging.

REVEREND (CONT'D)  
 (nervously)  
 And uh, uh, I'll bus a million man march  
 right down Main Street.

Looks of horror overcome the faces in the audience.

REVEREND (CONT'D)  
 (regaining his confidence)  
 During cheerleader practice!

A CHEERLEADER in the audience blushes bright red. Her MOTHER grabs her hand and drags her from the room in terror.

THE MAYOR  
 Reverend, I'm sure we can work this out  
 somehow.

REVEREND  
 Those children were-

THE MAYOR  
 A handicapped parking permit?

REVEREND  
 Nothing will erase-

THE MAYOR  
 A street named after you?

REVEREND  
 (warming to the idea)  
 Main Street?

THE MAYOR  
 I was thinking of something a little  
 more, well, on the other side of town.

REVEREND  
 (furious)  
 Always a plan by the man to keep a brotha  
 down!

THE MAYOR  
 Please, just tell us what we can do!

Angelo, George and Barry sit in the back in disguises.

On stage the Reverend is writes formulas on a black board.

REVEREND

Based on my algorithmic analysis of the violation perpetrated on my people, compounded daily plus a penalty for early enslavement, I believe a donation of \$29.95 from each of you muthafu-, er mothers, fathers and children should rectumfy this situation. Will that be cash , check or credit card?

Mary swipes the credit card machine she holds in her hands.

EXT. DOWDY VOLUNTEER FIREHOUSE- NIGHT

George, Ray, Angelo, Steven and Frank arrive back at the firehouse, now vandalized with smashed windows and covered in spray painted graffiti.

A car drives by slowly. Shotgun blasts break the silence. The firemen dive to the ground as the car speeds off.

STEVEN

Every homey in the hood wants to bust caps into our asses.

BARRY RAY

That was my defensive line.

FRANK UMM

The tight ends?

GEORGE

The town wants to crucify us.

ANGELO

Not for nuthin' but my uncle can hook us up with some witness relocation.

BARRY RAY

We're not witnesses.

ANGELO

He can arrange that too. What do you wanna witness?

GEORGE

(softly)

We need to catch him.

ANGELO

What?

BARRY RAY

Catch who?

GEORGE  
Whoever is setting the fires.

FRANK UMM  
Isn't that kind of dangerous?

ANGELO  
We ain't cops.

GEORGE  
We're firemen. It's our job to protect  
this town. We need to win back the  
respect of our neighbors.

Patriotic music begins.

GEORGE (CONT'D)  
They need to know that they can depend on  
us. Wherever there's a cat stuck in a  
tree we'll be there.

FRANK UMM  
Wherever there's a midget caught in a  
chimney we'll be there.

ANGELO  
And wherever there's a house being burned  
down because someone's bitch ex-wife is  
shacking up with a Puerto Rican boxboy-

The patriotic music stops with a phonograph needle scratch.

ANGELO (CONT'D)  
Figuratively speaking.

GEORGE  
There's an arsonist burning down our town  
and they need us more than ever.

INT. DOWDY VOLUNTEER FIREHOUSE- REC ROOM- NIGHT

The team takes seats as George tapes up 8x10 photographs of  
Dowdy citizens onto a blackboard.

GEORGE  
I've narrowed down the list of suspects.

FRANK UMM  
What about Wilkinson?

GEORGE  
Wally? I don't think-

FRANK UMM

He's been putting his garbage out on Tuesdays.

ANGELO

My uncle can talk to him about dat.

STEVEN

The plumber.

ANGELO

No, the trash management executive.

FRANK UMM

A man doesn't follow the rules he's liable to do anything.

BARRY RAY

He's got a point. Like Mary Jane Johnson.

GEORGE

Who?

BARRY RAY

Gave me the clap in '42.

ANGELO

I bet it was an Arab terrorist.

BARRY RAY

Or an Indian. They're always building fires.

ANGELO

Cuz they don't have stoves.

FRANK UMM

(somewhat distant)

My mother, my mother liked fire. She liked the fire on the stove.

The background behind Frank fades to darkness as he is illuminated in a harsh spotlight.

FRANK UMM (CONT'D)

(trance-like)

Heating up the wire hangers. No Mommy that's too hot. I'll be good this time I promise. The basement is so dark, so cold, so scary.

Frank snaps out of his trance while the others stare at him in disbelief.



GEORGE  
 (breaking the silence)  
 What about Old Man McCoy?

No one reacts or responds because they are all staring at Frank.

GEORGE (CONT'D)  
 Jebediah McCoy?

ANGELO  
 Jeb the Pyro?

GEORGE  
 Twenty years ago he fire bombed three  
 Cluck and Chuck's and the Bowl-n-Brew on  
 I-50.

ANGELO  
 And da' point is?

Barry and Frank shrug their shoulders also oblivious to any connection.

INT. DOWDY VOLUNTEER FIREHOUSE- NIGHT

Only four photos remain on the board.

The first image is of exotic dancer LAETITIA LARUE-

GEORGE (O.S.)  
 Laetitia Larue, her fire show is known  
 to everyone here and I think the danger  
 is obvious.

ANGELO (O.S.)  
 Jimmy Ray's eyebrows still haven't grown  
 back yet.

GEORGE (O.S.)  
 Let's make sure she keeps her pants on  
 until she gives us an alibi.

The next photo, FATHER O'REILLY-

GEORGE (O.S.) (CONT'D)  
 Father O'Reilly, Roman Catholic and  
 candle fanatic. Enough said.

Photo number three, FRED-

GEORGE (O.S.) (CONT'D)  
 Fred of Fred's Ice Cream Shoppe.

BARRY RAY (O.S.)

The man wears a pink jacket fer chrissakes.

ANGELO (O.S.)

Not for nuthin' but he started seeing a therapist over in Mt. Valley a few months ago. That's a time bomb waiting to go off right there.

FRANK UMM (O.S.)

(defensively)

Seeing a therapist doesn't mean someone's crazy.

And finally, JEBEDIAH MCCOY, a thin stupid looking hick with a thick beard and mustache-

GEORGE

And finally Jeb McCoy, a proven arsonist and pyromaniac.

FRANK UMM

Who hasn't been seen in town for twenty years.

GEORGE

He's back boys, and he's our man, I know it .... but keep an eye on everyone. And let's be careful out there.

EXT. FRED'S ICE CREAM SHOPPE- NIGHT

Through storefront window, we see Fred meticulously wiping down his counter.

INT. VEHICLE- NIGHT

Angelo and Coach Barry crouch down in their seats

ANGELO

Not for nuthin' but I was always good at detectin' stuff. Like catchin' cheatin' wives.

BARRY RAY

Oh yeah. And just how did you catch your wife?

ANGELO

After she filed for divorce I started followin' her.

BARRY RAY

Pretty smart.

ANGELO

Smart but it ain't easy. There's an art to bein' a dick and I've got it down cold. You've gotta blend in wit' the environment. Become a shadow if you will.

EXT. DOWDY STREET- NIGHT

Angelo and Coach Barry vehicle of choice- their cherry red fire truck, the only vehicle parked on the deserted street.

EXT. LINDY FAMILY HOME- NIGHT

George Lindy closes the gate of the white picket fence surrounding his picture perfect home.

INT. LINDY FAMILY HOME- LIVING ROOM- NIGHT

George enters and finds his living room dark and empty.

GEORGE

Honey, I'm home. Honey?

MARY LINDY (O.S.)

In the kitchen! Give me a minute.

George falls back into his over-cushioned E-Z chair and turns on the television with the remote. MARY LINDY, an attractive average American 1950' style housewife, comes into the living room wearing an apron covering her dress. She carries a ladle and gives George a warm kiss on the cheek.

MARY LINDY (CONT'D)

You look tired dear. Rough day?

GEORGE

More than you can imagine.

MARY LINDY

Well I want to hear all about but first the kitchen calls.

GEORGE

What's for dinner?

MARY LINDY

It's a surprise.

Mary goes back into the kitchen. George puts his feet up on an ottoman. The television news is on but he is not paying attention.

## TELEVISION ANCHOR

Last night Sneaky Pete's Porn Emporium was destroyed in a blaze that is now an all to common sight. Professor Tim Whitmore of Dowdy Community College has put together a psychological profile of the arsonist.

George raises the volume.

## TIM WHITMORE

We're dealing with someone of above average intelligence, an individual seriously disturbed but nonetheless able to function in society as a normal person.

George leans forward.

## TIM WHITMORE (CONT'D)

To put it bluntly it is someone you know. It could be the person you work with, your next door neighbor, even your husband, your wife, your child.

## TELEVISION ANCHOR

A school, an orphanage, a library and now a porn emporium. Do the targets suggest anyone in particular?

## TIM WHITMORE

It's most likely a Republican.

The television blurs as George's attention drifts into a daydream.

## TIM WHITMORE (O.S.) (CONT'D)

(in George's imagination)

Someone you know- your neighbor- your wife- your child- someone you know- know- know-

DISSOLVE TO:

GEORGE'S DREAM- canted camera angles and warped audio tell us the world is not as it seems.

INT. LINDY FAMILY HOME- GEORGE, JR.'S BEDROOM- NIGHT

GEORGE JR., the spitting image of dad, works intently behind an enormous chemistry set. Beakers of liquid bubble and fizzle as George watches on.

GEORGE, JR.

Science is a serious business Dad and it takes a serious person to win the science fair.

GEORGE

I can make a volcano with baking soda and vinegar.

GEORGE, JR.

Billy the retard has that one covered. I've lowered the ignition temperature of magnesium sulfate by fifty two percent. See?

George, Jr. ignites a strip of magnesium sulfate which burns with radioactive brilliance. The light pulses over George's horrified face.

TIM WHITMORE (O.S.)

Someone you know- your child- your wife! Even you George- George-

MARY LINDY (O.S.)

George! George!

IN THE LIVING ROOM

George seemingly wakes from his daydream, sweating and breathless.

MARY LINDY (O.S.)

George! Dinner!

END OF GEORGE'S DAYDREAM

George sits up in his chair and wipes sweat from his face.

AT THE DINNER TABLE

George and his son watch hungrily as Mary places a covered dish in the center of the table.

MARY LINDY

Surprise!

Mary lifts the cover. Flames burst upward.

MARY LINDY (CONT'D)

Flambe!

George screams in horror.

EXT. FRED'S ICE CREAM SHOPPE- NIGHT

DOOR CHIMES sound as Fred exits his shop.

INT. DOWDY FIRE TRUCK- NIGHT

Angelo and Barry are fast asleep in the truck. Barry stirs with the chimes and shakes Angelo.

BARRY RAY

Wake up! Wake up! Quick! He's moving.

EXT. FRED'S ICE CREAM SHOPPE- NIGHT

Fred locks up the shop and heads home down the street, deserted except for the fire truck parked in the distance. He hears the RUMBLE as the fire truck is started and put into gear.

Fred continues walking. The fire truck slowly follows him a few feet behind. Fred stops and looks over his shoulder but the fire truck has stopped with a loud hydraulic hiss and low screeching of its brakes.

Fred starts walking again. The fire truck continues. Fred stops again. The fire truck stops but this time it's emergency lights flash for an instant and the siren wails for a split second.

INT. DOWDY FIRE TRUCK- NIGHT

ANGELO

Shit, I think he made us.

INT. DOWDY MUTUAL INSURANCE COMPANY- DAY

George is sits at his desk daydreaming, looking out his office window. Down the street, in the distance, he sees JEBEDIAH MCCOY walking along carrying a gas can. George rushes from his office.

EXT. MAIN STREET- DAY

George follows McCoy down streets, around corners, through alleys.

McCoy looks over his shoulder, sees George and breaks into a full run.

McCoy ducks into Chamberlain's Department Store.

INT. CHAMBERLAIN'S DEPARTMENT STORE- DAY

George spies McCoy ducking into the men's restroom.

INT. CHAMBERLAIN'S DEPT. STORE- RESTROOM- DAY

George kicks open the door. The door hits the back wall and rebounds into his face. He stumbles in a little dazed.

On the floor lie the Mayor, Professor Tom Whitmore, FATHER O'REILLY and WU FONG, middle aged Chinese man wearing thick coke bottle lens glasses. They all stumble to their feet.

George goes from stall to stall searching each one.

GEORGE

Jeb McCoy- where did he go?

WU FONG

Crazy man hit me from behind!

TOM WHITMORE

He came out of nowhere!

THE MAYOR

I'll see McCoy put away for life

FATHER O'REILLY

It is not our place to judge his guilt.  
Now is a time for forgiveness.

WU FONG

No way. I got whip rash. I sue!

The Mayor picks up the empty gasoline can.

THE MAYOR

I guess this is-

GEORGE

Exhibit A, Mayor. That's all the proof  
we'll need.

TOM WHITMORE

The window!

GEORGE

What?

Tom points to the small window half open and placed high on the wall.

TOM WHITMORE

He must have climbed out the window.

George climbs up to the window using the sink as a step and looks out.

George's P.O.V.- A sheer drop falls two hundred feet down a rock cliff where rough surf meets razor sharp, jagged rocks. Sharks circle in the water, chomping in anticipation.

TOM WHITMORE (CONT'D)

It's the only way.

GEORGE

(confused)

I don't see how? He couldn't-

THE MAYOR

That crazy mountain man is going to fry for this.

WU FONG

(to the Mayor)

Your suit all messed up. You need dry creaner?

INT. SHERIFF DILLON'S OFFICE- DAY

The sheriff sits behind his desk cleaning his silver plated revolver. George sits across from him in a seat at least a foot lower than Dillon's.

GEORGE

Sheriff, I need you to issue a warrant for the arrest of Jebediah McCoy for arson and assault on a public official.

SHERIFF DILLON

If I arrested everyone in this town who ever assaulted the mayor this place would be empty....

GEORGE

He's burning our town down Sheriff!

SHERIFF DILLON

And you have proof to back that up?

GEORGE

Well almost.

SHERIFF DILLON

Almost? Almost gets me Alan Dershowitz half way up my ass and that guy's got Matzoh balls the size of melons.

Sheriff Dillon ushers George to the door.

SHERIFF DILLON (CONT'D)

You come talk to me when you have video of him burning down a church.



A door to a back room of the office opens and Reverend Washington comes storming out.

REVEREND

I don't have all day muthafucka!  
 (seeing George)  
 You again! I'm gonna get a restrainin'  
 order on you.

Through the open door of the back room, George sees Peter, Paul and Mary counting a huge pile of cash.

SHERIFF DILLON

(to George)  
 Have a nice day.

Sheriff Dillon slams the front door on George.

EXT. SHERIFF OFFICE- WAITING ROOM- DAY

Coach Barry, Angelo and Frank are waiting for George.

ANGELO

So what's the word?

GEORGE

We're alone on this one, boys.

They walk down the center of Main Street, four across, modern day gunslingers straight out of a Leone western.

EXT. MOTEL SIX-NINE- NIGHT

Flashing neon lights read "VACANCY" and "1/4 HOUR RATES".

INT. MOTEL SIX-NINE- ROOM 23- NIGHT

George is dancing with Miss Alicia but he is stumbling over his own feet and hers.

MISS ALICIA

Tell me dahling. What is wrong tonight?  
 I know something is bothering you.

GEORGE

It's the arsonist.

Alicia flies into a rage at the mention of the man who burned down her establishment. She begins to smash every piece of glass in the room- vases, glasses, and mirrors.

MISS ALICIA

(furious)

I would cut off his balls and feed them to my dog- but only after I crushed them with my heels..... Tell me- do you know who this soon to be ball-less evil wretch is?

GEORGE

It's Old Man McCoy. Jebediah McCoy.

A change comes over Miss Alicia. A sultriness comes into her eyes and she begins to breathe heavily. We see her in soft focus with heavy diffusion.

MISS ALICIA

No, I do not think so.

GEORGE

It's a fact. He's a known pyromaniac.

MISS ALICIA

(passionately)

It is true he has started many fires in his time... but he is not the man you are looking for.

GEORGE

How do you know?

MISS ALICIA

He would not have burned me down.... I vill tell you the truth.... the only fire he ever started was in my loins.... Vee vere lovers many years ago before the var. He vas running liquor-

GEORGE

Moonshine?

MISS ALICIA

No, Bartles and James. Vee bought cases in Jersey. Lower taxes. I would ride with him for- for company. Vee vere caught one night. He vas given two choices- join the army or join a chain gang. I .... I vas only given one choice. Vhen he returned he vas not the same man I knew. It vas only years later that I learned his daughter vas actually mine.

Tears well up in Miss Alicia's eyes. George holds her.

GEORGE

I'm going to bring McCoy... or... or  
whoever this firemonger is to justice.  
He'll pay for what he's done, I promise.

Miss Alicia flies into another rage. She continues smashes  
the mirrors and glasses and lamps.

MISS ALICIA

I promise too that the man who burned me  
down will never piss standing up again.

George quietly picks up his jacket and retreats from the room  
as she continues her rampage.

EXT. MOTEL SIX-NINE- NIGHT

George exits the motel. A window shatters and a toilet  
smashes to the ground in front of him. It flushes. Looking  
up he sees Miss Alicia in the frame of the broken window.

MISS ALICIA

Until we meet again darling.

EXT. DOWDY DOWNTOWN- NIGHT

George wanders the streets of Dowdy, contemplating the  
mystery. In his mind, he imagines-

- McCoy setting the fire at the Library.
- McCoy's face morphing to that of Laetitia LaRue then Father  
O'Reilly.
- McCoy climbing out the restroom window and plummeting to  
the rocks below. As he falls, McCoy's face morphs into that  
of Fred, Sheriff Dillon and then Reverend Washington.
- Scientific formulas float through the air.
- Two naked breasts jiggle in close up.

George snaps out of his daydream just in time to see Jebediah  
McCoy entering a warehouse with a gasoline can.

INT. WAREHOUSE- CONTINUOUS

George sneaks stealthily through the darkened warehouse  
searching for McCoy... and finds him just as he strikes a  
match and ignites the fire.

GEORGE

Stop where you are! Your game is up!

George tackles McCoy and they struggle as the fire builds.

The loud SIREN of the smoke alarm blasts.

McCoy breaks free and jumps through a window, landing on the fire escape.

EXT. WAREHOUSE- FIRE ESCAPE- CONTINUOUS

Below McCoy sees the emergency lights of the Dowdy Fire Truck. He starts climbing up.

INT. WAREHOUSE- CONTINUOUS

George tries to stamp the fire out as Angelo, Coach Barry, Frank and Steven arrive in fire gear.

ANGELO

We got it! Get McCoy!

EXT. WAREHOUSE- FIRE ESCAPE- MOMENTS LATER

George climbs the fire escape.

EXT. WAREHOUSE- NIGHT

The street fills with people as the citizens of Dowdy are drawn to the fire.

Angelo, Barry and Frank exit the warehouse, covered in soot but no worse for wear.

BARRY RAY

The fire's been taken care of.

The Mayor steps out in front of the firemen.

THE MAYOR

(louder)

The fire's been taken care of people.  
There's nothing to worry about.

ANGELO

George is bringing down Jebediah McCoy.

THE MAYOR

(louder)

And I have had the arsonist apprehended!

George emerges from the warehouse with McCoy in custody. The crowd cheers.

Press photographers cameras flash away. The television news crew moves in closer knocking over a young child on crutches.

The Sheriff grabs McCoy's arm and smiles for the cameras.

THE MAYOR (CONT'D)

I've got a dry cleaning bill with your name on it McCoy.

WU FONG

(angry to the Mayor)

Hey that bill have your name on it! You pay or I got new suit!

GEORGE

Are you sure, Mr. Mayor?

THE MAYOR

What are you getting at, Lindy?

GEORGE

This is just a clever disguise!

George pulls a rubber face mask off McCoy. McCoy is now a portly man with the face of The Mayor. The crowd gasps in horror.

Sheriff Dillon puts a handcuff on the real Mayor standing across from the McCoy/Mayor imposter.

SHERIFF DILLON

We trusted you.

REVEREND

And I voted for you twice last year!

THE MAYOR

But I'm innocent. I have an alibi!

WU FONG

They gonna make bitch of you in jail!

George pulls the Mayor mask off revealing- Laetitia LaRue. The suspect now has a noticeably larger chest and a decidedly feminine figure. The crowd gasps again.

The real LAETITIA LARUE steps forward from the crowd.

LAETITIA LARUE

(to the crowd)

I'll be appearing all week at the Eager Beaver. Shows at three, six, nine and twelve. And don't forget your singles.

George pulls another mask off Larue revealing- Father O'Reilly. A magazine, TEEN SCOUTS falls from his jacket.

ULTRA CONSERVATIVE MAN

(pointing to magazine)

Probably got it on the internet!

The real Father O'Reilly steps out of the crowd and picks up the Teen Scouts magazine, hides it in his jacket and sneaks away.

George pulls a final mask off the arsonist revealing Professor Tom Whitmore.

GEORGE  
Tom Whitmore!

The name spreads through the crowd.

THE MAYOR  
Tom Whitmore!

SHERIFF DILLON  
Whitmore!

BARRY RAY  
Banging coeds for B pluses wasn't enough  
for you Professor?

GEORGE  
Whitmore set all the fires and hoped to  
blame them on Jebediah McCoy.

THE MAYOR  
But why, Tom, why?

REVEREND  
Cuz the muthafucka's crazy, that's why!

Sheriff Dillon smacks Tommy on the back of the head.

SHERIFF DILLON  
Tell us!

TOM WHITMORE  
Jebediah McCoy is my grandfather...my  
grandfather and my uncle-

OLD LADY #1  
Well, the McCoy's did move here from  
Alabama.

TOM WHITMORE  
I wanted him locked up once and for all.

THE MAYOR  
But why, Tom, why?

REVEREND  
Cuz the muthafucka's crazy, that's why!

The Sheriff smacks Tom's head again.

TOM WHITMORE

If I could have had him locked up I would have assumed control of the family fortune.

SHERIFF DILLON

Family fortune? The McCoy family is listed in the dictionary under dirt and poor.

TOM WHITMORE

The McCoy diamond mine. Check the county deed registry.

SHERIFF DILLON

That was the McCay mine, son. And that mine's been done for 150 years.

The Sheriff drags Tom Whitmore off towards the police car.

THE MAYOR

(to the Dowdy F.D.)

On behalf of the people of Dowdy I want to thank you for everything you have done.

George, Angelo, Frank and Barry stand before the cheering crowd redeemed as the heroes they always hoped they would be.

Mary Lindy breaks through the crowd and rushes into George's arms. They kiss.

Next to the soot stained firemen stands Wu Fong.

WU FONG

You rook rike you need a dry creaner.

George's radio crackles

RADIO DISPATCHER (O.S.)

Alert, Engine Company One, 115 Mulberry Street, See the midget trapped in chimney.

GEORGE

Let's go boys. Duty calls.

The firemen rush to their truck. George jumps on to the platform on the back of the truck as it pulls away and blows a kiss to Mary.

The fire truck races off down Main Street. As it rounds the first corner it clips a fire hydrant.

A waterspout drenches the crowd as they watch in disbelief.

FADE TO BLACK