

FADE IN:

EXT. - CITY STREET - MIAMI - DAY

A GROUP OF HITCHHIKERS stick out their collective thumbs and grin as a black Cadillac approaches -- then curse and switch to their middle fingers as it zooms past.

INT. CADILLAC - MOVING - DAY

The driver, MR. EDDIE, a slick, middle-aged man with televangelist hair, glances at the rear view mirror and chuckles.

MR. EDDIE

Losers.

EXT. - CITY STREET - MIAMI - DAY

Just up the road, two teenagers -- BEN and OWEN -- wave their arms and jump up and down. As the Cadillac gets closer, they drop to their knees and beg.

The car passes, then screeches to a stop.

They high-five each other and stroll towards the car. Owen is taller, with a rough, blue-collar look. Ben has long hair and an adolescent beard.

Suddenly they hear shouting and glance back.

The last Group of Hitchhikers is running at full speed, trying to catch up.

Ben and Owen turn and haul ass for the Cadillac. It starts to take off. They manage to hop into the moving vehicle, just ahead of the cursing crowd.

INT. CADILLAC - MOVING - DAY

Ben & Owen settle into the plush back seat. Mr. Eddie lowers the music.

MR. EDDIE

Where you boys headin'?

BEN

Convention Center, on Miami Beach.  
We're gonna shove that nomination  
right up Nixon's --

OWEN

Ben -- did you see all them  
hitchhikers? We are sooo lucky to  
get a ride. Sooo lucky.

(under his breath)

Don't blow it.

MR. EDDIE

You boys want to know a secret?  
Luck -- is for losers. Winners  
don't need luck. I picked you boys  
up because you wanted a ride so bad  
you got down on your knees and  
begged for it. That's the kind of  
enthusiasm that can make you rich.  
I hate to see you waste it on some  
childish protest.

BEN

Don't tell me you support Tricky  
Dick!

Owen whacks Ben: not now!

MR. EDDIE

Take it easy boys -- I'm not a  
politician. I have a much higher  
calling. You can call me Mr. Eddie.

He snaps his fingers, presents a gold business card. It  
reads: *Mr. Eddie Smart, President, KOUPONS ARE KING!*

Ben takes the card.

MR. EDDIE

What I do is, I find ordinary folk -  
- just like you -- and turn them  
into millionaires!

Ben grabs the front seat and leans close to Mr. Eddie.

BEN

Mr. Eddie, that's exactly what  
wrong with this country! People  
are starving, soldiers are dying,  
we're about to nuke the entire  
planet --

Owen yanks him back.

OWEN

Don't mind him, sir. He's just angry at the world cause he never been laid.

Ben elbows Owen.

BEN

I just think the world's really screwed up. I want to change things. I want to make it better.

MR. EDDIE

That's a noble sentiment, son, very noble. But it takes a lot of money to change the world. The poor can't feed the poor; the downtrodden can't lift up the downtrodden. Get rich first; then you can help all the people you want. And when you do get rich, I guarantee you'll get laid.

Ben strokes his beard thoughtfully.

MR. EDDIE

(to Owen)

What about you, son?

OWEN

Me? No. I'm just a regular Joe. I work in a factory.

BEN

He also makes statues of Jesus, and Mary, and a bunch of Saints.

MR. EDDIE

People buy them?

OWEN

Yes sir, Catholics mainly.

MR. EDDIE

Why?

OWEN

To remind them of God, I guess.

MR. EDDIE

Son, every dollar I earn reminds me of God -- says it right there on the bill: In God We Trust.

EXT. MIAMI BEACH CONVENTION CENTER - DAY

The Cadillac pulls into a parking lot swarming with PROTESTORS.

INT. CADILLAC - DAY

Mr. Eddie unlocks the doors.

MR. EDDIE (CONT'D)

If you ever decide you want to get rich, look me up in Orlando -- it's the Land of Opportunity.

BEN

Not to be contrary, Mr. Eddie, but I heard the chance of getting a job at Disney World is less than zilch.

MR. EDDIE

You heard correctly, young man. But all those folks who came looking for a job -- they're still there, still looking for an opportunity. And that's what I offer, boys -- a Golden Opportunity. Bring me two thousand dollars each and I'll make you both millionaires. Guaranteed.

OWEN

I don't got me two thousand dollars, sir. Guaranteed.

BEN

Ditto on that.

MR. EDDIE

Then beg, borrow and steal it if you have to. Think about it. I can always spot a winner, and you boys are winners. It's a Golden Opportunity.

BEN

That's okay. Opportunity's knocking right now, and we're opening the door.

Ben and Owen fling open their doors.

MR. EDDIE

In that case, boys -- good luck.  
And keep your shoes clean.

OWEN

Yes sir.

Ben watches the multitude of laughing, upbeat PROTESTORS.

BEN

Owen, I think we may have a career  
as political activists.

EXT. MIAMI BEACH CONVENTION CENTER - DAY

Tear gas blows into the contorted faces of Ben and Owen. They  
claw at their burning eyes and scream! Face each other --  
scream louder!

Helicopters swoop back and forth above the fray. Tear-gassed  
protestors roll on the ground or stagger about like blind  
zombies.

Ben clears his eyes and looks around -- there's a water  
spigot across the lot. He grabs Owen and points it out.

Owen tosses the other protestors aside to get to the front of  
the line, clearing a path for Ben. They douse their faces.

EXT. CITY STREET - MIAMI - NIGHT

Ben and Owen, dejected, sit by the side of the road, eyes red  
and swollen. They pass a marijuana joint.

BEN

Did you see the guy in the  
helicopter -- the one that dropped  
the tear gas? Owen, I swear it was  
Richard Nixon.

OWEN

Oh, right. You think Richard Nixon  
commandeered a helicopter just so  
he could get his jollies droppin'  
tear gas on a bunch of protestors?

BEN

Why not? He gets his jollies dropping bombs on innocent civilians.

OWEN

You're such a radical, man.

Owen stands up, helps Ben.

OWEN

Maybe we better start hoofin' it. I don't feel lucky enough to get me a ride, right about now.

They start walking.

BEN

You think it's true, what Mr. Eddie said? Luck is for losers?

OWEN

Well, being unlucky don't make you a winner. If it did, I'd be the biggest winner in the world.

BEN

Bullshit. I'm just as unlucky as you are.

OWEN

No way, dude. You got a mom and dad.

BEN

So what? You got TERRI. She's beautiful. When you guys get married --

OWEN

We'll never get married. BULLDOG put his foot down. Banned me for life.

BEN

Again?

OWEN

Yeah.

A group of filthy, exhausted FACTORY WORKERS shuffle out of a building and line up at the bus stop.

Owen looks them over and for a brief moment, they all have his face. He shakes his head and looks away.

OWEN

I'm going nowhere, Ben. Bulldog knows it. You know it. Even Terri knows it.

BEN

Same here, buddy. I got nowhere to go. Since I graduated high school, My dad says I have to get a job, and get this -- pay rent. To live in my own home! I never should have graduated high school.

OWEN

We sure are a couple of winners, aren't we?

They stop walking.

Owen hangs his head and stares at the sidewalk.

Ben watches a succession of LUXURIOUS CARS pass by, in slow motion, as if taunting him. He stokes his beard for a while, deep in thought, then grabs Owen and shakes him out of his funk.

BEN

You know what, Owen? We are winners. And you know who believes that?

OWEN

Nobody.

BEN

Nobody but Mr. Eddie. He believes in us. So why not? If you get rich, Bulldog will let you marry Terri, right? He doesn't dislike you, he just thinks you're a loser.

OWEN

Yeah, that's his main beef.

BEN

Plus, if I make a lot of money, I can help a lot of people.

OWEN

The poor can't feed the poor.

Ben takes out the business card. They view it together, pondering.

OWEN

There's one glitch: we ain't got two thousand dollars.

INT. ROYAL CASTLE - DAY

Ben is sitting at the counter. BEN'S DAD works the pots and pans in a sweaty frenzy.

BEN'S DAD

These cockeyed franchises you're talking about -- have you sold any?

BEN

Not exactly. First I need to put a little money in the pipeline.

BEN'S DAD

Uh huh. And how does an unemployed, eighteen-year-old define a little money?

BEN

Two thousand dollars should do it.

Ben's Dad laughs maniacally. He stops cooking to pop open the cash register. He takes out a one-dollar bill and slaps it on the counter.

BEN'S DAD

Here. You're on your own for the rest.

He returns to his cooking.

BEN

Dad, I'm serious. It's a Golden Opportunity. All I want is two thousand measly dollars...

Ben's Dad slams a pan on the grill.

BEN'S DAD

Do you have any idea how many of these shitty hamburgers I gotta fry to make two thousand dollars?

He gives a reassuring smile to the WORRIED CUSTOMER eating a hamburger.

BEN'S DAD (CONT'D)

You want to make some money, Ben?  
There's a shift opening up here.

BEN

Dad, with all due respect, what you  
do here -- it's Hell.

BEN'S DAD

That's right, son. It is Hell. And  
you know what? I've worked in Hell  
for a long time to save a few bucks  
so you could go to college and not  
have to work in Hell. I'll be  
damned if I hand them over for some  
half-assed, get-rich-quick scheme.  
I'm not gullible, like your mother.

Ben starts to leave, then turns around and snatches the  
dollar bill off the counter. He storms out.

INT. BULLDOG'S HOUSE - DAY

Owen is sitting on the couch, holding hands with TERRI (18),  
a pretty girl with compassionate, hopeful eyes.

BULLDOG, a big man in his sixties, glares at him.

OWEN

I know I ain't worthy of your  
daughter, sir.

BULLDOG

Not by a long shot.

OWEN (CONT'D)

She deserves way better than me.

BULLDOG

So much better.

OWEN

I got no right to be in love with  
her.

BULLDOG

You're quite the salesman, Owen.

Terri squeezes his hand, urges him to go on.

OWEN

But, if you'll just loan me the money, I swear I'll become a millionaire. I'll give your daughter everything she deserves.

Bulldog cracks his knuckles and thinks about it. Owen and Terri hold their breaths.

BULLDOG

Tell you what. I'll make a deal with you, man to man. I'll loan you the money. But if you don't come back with a million dollars in, say, one year, you don't come back at all. You're out of my daughter's life forever.

TERRI

Owen, No...

OWEN

Yes! We have ourselves a deal.

TERRI

Baby, it's not that easy to make money.

OWEN

Trust me, it's the only way. It's a Golden Opportunity.

BULLDOG

I have your word?

OWEN

You got it, sir.

They shake hands.

TERRI

Owen...

OWEN

Have faith in me, Terri.

TERRI

I do. I have so much faith in you.

She gives him an adoring look. Bulldog doesn't like it.