

BAD HANDS

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BAD BUNNY PICTURES INC.

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FADE IN:

EXT.--NEW JERSEY TURNPIKE--NIGHT

A battered CADILLAC exits at The Oranges and lurches to a stop at a RAMADA INN.

INT.--RAMADA INN--NIGHT

MARTIN BRECK, (MARTY) 30's, walks through the lobby, passing a sign announcing "Welcome Garden State Podiatrists." He checks in at the front desk and gets his credentials.

INT.--HOTEL ROOM--NIGHT

Marty stares into his reflection in the mirror, a stoic, detached look on his face. Just below the mirror, his hands move feverishly. PRACTICING...

INT.--RAMADA INN'S "ASBURY PARK" ROOM--NIGHT

Marty sits at a banquet table listening to the keynote address, "Resonance Imaging and the Metatarsus," feigning interest and comprehension. He looks past his "colleagues" to see TOMMY McDANIEL, T-MACK, also 30's, the life of the party, holding court at the bar with a team of drunken "corn specialists".

T-Mack meets Marty's glare and cockily raises his drink in a toast. Marty looks away.

INT.--RAMADA INN'S "ASBURY PARK" BAR--NIGHT

A folded COCKTAIL NAPKIN stands straight up in the swizzle sticks. Marty opens it to reveal the number "217."

INT.--RAMADA INN ROOM 217--NIGHT

Ashtrays overflow. Smoke chokes the room. Marty and T-Mack sit opposite each other, FOUR PODIATRISTS take the other seats. A pile of tens, twenties and hundreds lay in the middle of a circular table.

T-MACK

(to Marty)

No way you got it. (to other players) No way this cocksucker's got it. I raise six hundred.

Marty glares at T-Mack.

DOCTOR #1

I thought we were playing for fun.

T-MACK

This is fun.

(to Marty)

No way.

DOCTOR #2
Six hundred to stay.

T-MACK
He ain't got it.

DOCTOR #3
That's a Lexus payment. I'm out.

T-MACK
Do what you want, pussy, I ain't running.

Doctors 1, 2 & 4 throw in six hundred each.

MARTY
Bump it another three.

Marty tosses in \$900.00.

DOCTOR #4
Jesus Christ.

T-MACK
He's full of shit.

DOCTOR #2
Three hundred to stay.

T-MACK
(to Marty)
You're going down hard.

T-Mack and the doctors throw in again.

MARTY
Gentlemen?

DOCTOR #1
Flush.

DOCTOR #2
Shit. Straight...

DOCTOR #4
Don't bother. Goddamnit.

T-MACK
(to Marty)
Just you and me, doc. Full boat, jacks
and nines.

MARTY
Nice hand... Four tens.

Marty lays FOUR PERFECT TENS on the table for all to see and immediately rakes in the cash.

EXT.--RAMADA INN PARKING LOT--NIGHT

Marty trods past a long line of Acuras, BMW's and Mercedes, to his dented, primer-stained caddy. He tosses a cash-filled suitcase into the passenger seat and admires the new 500SL parked next to him. Marty leans over the SL's hood, lightly brushes his hand over the sleek black paint, and gouges his key into it. He scrapes the paint fender to fender.

Alone in a corner of the parking lot, a SHADOWY FIGURE watches from behind the wheel of a gold Jaguar XJS. As Marty pulls out, the Jaguar follows.

INT.--TRUCKSTOP ON NJ TURNPIKE--DAWN

A table in back. Marty swigs a final gulp of a scotch and water as he divides \$6000.00 into four equal piles. T-Mack cuts a line of coke on a compact's mirror.

Marty puts two of the piles in one envelope, neatly pockets his \$1500.00, and tosses the remaining bills at T-Mack, knocking the mirror and the expensive powder to the floor.

T-MACK
What's your fucking problem?

MARTY
Six hundred's my problem.

T-MACK
What?

MARTY
(impersonating T-Mack)
"There's no way this cocksucker's got it. I'll raise \$600.00." Oh, and nice language. Not many doctors I know address each other as "cocksucker".

T-MACK
They threw in.

MARTY
And they would've thrown in more. Shit, that game still be going on. How many times I tell you, bet small and slow. It's confidence.

T-MACK
Six hundred, big deal. They're doctors.

MARTY
They're podiatrists. Cheap-ass Chinks and Indians.

T-MACK
Indians with a dot or a feather?

MARTY
Fuck you, T-Mack.

T-MACK
Just trying to lighten things up.

MARTY
You better wise up, I can't live on this
shit. Oh, something else...

Marty quickly grabs T-Mack's wrist and twists it over, revealing
a WIZARD, an ancient card-trapping contraption.

MARTY (cont'd)
Lose this thing.

T-MACK
I'm a traditionalist.

MARTY
Traditionalist my ass. If you we're,
you'd learn how to rifle stack.

T-MACK
I do pretty much the same shit you do.

MARTY
Bullshit. What I do is an art. What you
do is a carny game.

Marty leans in close.

MARTY (cont'd)
If somebody finds you wearing this, I
don't know you. You're on your own.

T-MACK
Alright. Christ...

MARTY
Grab your shit...

As T-Mack leans under the table to pick up the mirror, Marty
skims \$200.00 from the house envelope and stashes it in his
shirt.

EXT.--TRUCKSTOP PARKING LOT--DAWN

A Trenton Times headline catches Marty's eye. He drops coins in
the box and pulls out the paper. Hidden behind an EIGHTEEN-
WHEELER, the gold Jaguar idles...

EXT.--ST. LUKES PARISH, SOUTH CAMDEN, NJ--MORNING

Marty's road-weary caddy rests along the trash strewn curb in
front of ST. LUKE'S PARISH, a dilapidated Catholic Church the
South Camden Archdiocese long ago abandoned.

Steam pours from a sewer as the Jaguar slowly rolls by...

INT.--ST. LUKES PARISH, MAIN FLOOR--CONTINUOUS

A RAGGED-LOOKING MAN pushes a broom across the dusty floor as Marty passes, newspaper under his arm. POOL TABLES sit where church pews used to, a MAHOGANY BAR where confession booths once were. Marty walks to a STEEL DOOR just to the right of the PULPIT. He knocks. From behind the door, a VOICE sounds.

VOICE

Yeah?

MARTY

Marty.

The door opens. Marty walks down a long FLIGHT OF STAIRS.

INT.--ST. LUKES PARISH BASEMENT--CONTINUOUS

Marty tosses the newspaper onto the faded felt of an old ROULETTE TABLE. As the house envelope falls out, the paper opens to reveal the headline "State OK's Riverboat Gaming in Philly."

MARTY

What's this gonna mean?

LEO VATELLI, (60's), the craggy faced patriarch of this underground casino, pulls the bills from the envelope and counts them. All around him are dirty CARD TABLES, CRAPS BOARDS, and rickety SLOT MACHINES.

LEO

(to the envelope)
Seems light.

MARTY

Podiatrists. What's this gonna mean?

Marty points to the headline. Leo flips to the SPORTS SECTION.

LEO

Sixers won last night.

MARTY

Leo.

LEO

They don't win that often anymore, it's a good thing.

(shifting gears)

Look, it ain't gonna mean dick. Atlantic City didn't, this won't either. We're a neighborhood place. (picking up the envelope) Still seems light.

MARTY

Believe me, Leo, I'm as sick of being poor as you are of light envelopes. You gotta do better than podiatrists.

LEO

Or, you could do better living up to your potential.

Marty stares right through him. A beat passes. Leo brings a BRASS ZIPPO to a CIGAR STUB. Lights it...

LEO (cont'd)

Alright. First Federal Trust is having their branch managers convention next week in Philly. Should be lots of...

MARTY

I don't cross the bridge, Leo, you know that. Jersey, New York, I'll even do fucking Connecticut. I don't do Philly.

LEO

Alright, alright...

(beat)

Class of 98 reunion at Rutgers next weekend. Maybe some action, don't know.

MARTY

I'll take it. Thanks, Leo.

Marty turns to leave. Leo goes back to thumbing through the cash in the envelope.

LEO

Hey Martin.

MARTY

(turns back)

Yeah.

LEO

Here.

Leo stuffs four one hundred dollar bills into Marty's hand.

INT.--CAR OUTSIDE PHILADELPHIA DELICATESSAN--DAY

A NEW SEVILLE idles in the deli's parking lot. Inside, a YOUNG WOMAN drops a six-pack of MICKEY'S BIG MOUTHS on the counter and hands her ID to the CLERK, who eyes it suspiciously.

Back outside, the Seville's DRIVER looks down at the HIGH SCHOOL YEARBOOK on his lap. A red-circled class picture stares up at him. He looks back out the windshield to see the raven-haired beauty from the picture locked in an argument with the deli clerk.

EXT.--PHILADELPHIA STREET--DAY

The Seville pulls to the sidewalk just in front of the empty-handed girl. JACK SCALLEY, 50's tall and angular with a perpetually sweaty brow, pushes a button. The Seville's window gracefully slides down.

JACK
Miss? I think you forgot something.

RICKI DELASANDRO, 19, quickly surveys Jack's Rolex, gold pinky ring, and the six-pack of Mickey's he holds in his hand. She approaches the car with a confident, seductive gait.

RICKI
Looks like I did.

EXT.--ANTHONY'S TRANSMISSION, SOUTH CAMDEN--DAY

T-Mack naps in the afternoon sun, his head against an old Fanta Soda machine. The LARGE FIGURE OF A MAN walks over and blocks out the sun. T-Mack squints up at the shadowy eclipse.

MAN
Can you take a look at my car?

The gold Jaguar idles on the hot asphalt.

INT.--ST. LUKE'S PARISH, MAIN FLOOR--AFTERNOON

Two ONE HUNDRED-DOLLAR BILLS lay on the bar. Marty drinks a scotch as DOMINIC CANTINI, an obese, disheveled businessman, stares through a gin-induced haze. On the bar sits a tall, half-full scotch and water glass with the Jack of Spades resting on the glass' lip. On top of the card, a cigarette stands straight up. A quarter rests precariously on top of the cigarette.

The sweaty businessman studies every inch of this delicate rig.

DOMINIC
And you won't touch it?

MARTY
My Franklin against yours. I won't touch the glass, card, smoke, or quarter.

DOMINIC
What about the bar?

MARTY
Won't touch that either.

Dominic carefully surveys the rig again. A BEAT.

DOMINIC
Alright, Breck. Don't fuck around.

MARTY

Sure thing.

Marty backs away from the bar, takes a breath, and begins gesturing wildly, David Copperfield on half a fifth of Chivas. He makes one "practice" run, then another. Dominic's eyes widen.

On the final go, Marty stops just before hitting the bar, crouches down, and BLOWS at the playing card, sending it and the cigarette flying. The quarter clinks down perfectly into the glass. Marty takes the applause of the bar patrons and swigs the remainder of the drink, holding the quarter in his teeth.

He reaches for Dominic's c-note, but Dominic's beefy hand locks down on his wrist.

DOMINIC

No you don't, motherfucker!

Dominic slams a knife down into the bar, just missing Marty's hand. He digs the knife out and raises it again, only to get lifted off his feet by the bartender and a sawed-off pool cue. The bartender drags Dominic's writhing girth the length of the bar, letting go only long enough to deliver a punch to the back of Dominic's fat, sweaty head that sends him flying through the Parish door and out into the street.

The bartender turns in a rage and stalks back to the bar.

BARTENDER

(to Marty)

God damnit Marty! You keep that shit on the road!

Marty tucks the c-note into his shirt pocket as he turns away.

INT.--ST. LUKE'S PARISH, MAIN FLOOR--LATER

A butt-filled ashtray smolders as ice melts in several otherwise empty scotch glasses. Marty sits alone at a corner table, far from the bar and pool tables. He's drunk, but his fingers move with deft precision over a deck of PLAYING CARDS. He shuffles, cuts, wedges, and manipulates the cards like a wizard. As if in a trance, he plays an imaginary game of FIVE CARD DRAW.

He speaks as he lays the draw cards on the table, face up, each card appearing almost magically as he announces it.

MARTY

Full house. Jacks and nines.

(next)

Straight to the ten, just missed the straight flush.

(next)

Two, Ace, Five. Worst hand of the night.

(next)

And dealer takes two. King. Three kings showing. And a...

Marty slowly runs his thumb over the end of the deck, and draws a single card from it's center. With the same hand, Marty flips the card down, revealing the final KING.

Suddenly, a bony hand reaches into Marty's shirt pocket and snatches out Dominic's c-note. Marty turns, ready to fight, but immediately stops. Looming over him is the corpse-like face of SID BARNES and his polar opposite, the bear-like JO JO.

SID
Nice trick you got there. Make any money with it?

MARTY
Not enough. How you doing, Sid?

SID
Ah, fucking flu, you know? Always gets me in December. You?

MARTY
You know.

SID
Yeah, things are slow. You got a second to talk to us outside?

MARTY
Yeah sure, Sid.

SMASH CUT TO:

EXT.--ALLEY BEHIND ST. LUKES--DUSK

A 2x4 slams into Marty's stomach. Jo Jo is on him immediately, smashing the board down against Marty's shins. Marty crumples to the ground. Sid slowly walks over to him.

SID
You alright?

Marty, dry heaving, waves his arm out to the side, half "I'm okay" and half "I surrender."

SID (cont'd)
I only ask 'cause that looked like it hurt.

JO JO
I think he's gonna puke.

SID
Nah, he's alright. He's sick, but he ain't gonna puke.

Sid crouches down next to Marty's heaving body.

SID (cont'd)

See Jo Jo, Marty gets sick like this every year, not flu though. Marty's sickness is football. Can't lay off of the friggin Eagles. Pick him up.

Jo Jo underhooks Marty's throat, lifts him up and slams his back into the chainlink fence.

SID (cont'd)

Fourth quarter last week, I thought he had it. Minus six to the Skins. Home. I probably would'a taken that. Then they fumble on the ten. What is that but bum fucking luck? You owe me eight grand.

Marty fumbles through his pockets. Hundreds fall out onto the cold gravel.

SID (cont'd)

Jo Jo, count that.

JO JO

Twelve hundred.

SID

Twelve hundred. Wait, you gave me one in the bar. Shit Marty, that's not enough.

MARTY

(heaving)

I can get it... By next week, I...

SID

No. You see, Marty, next week's too late. Twenty-four hours. Okay?

MARTY

Okay.

(choked silence)

Okay.

SID

Good, an agreement. A business agreement, I like that. Sixty-seven hundred in twenty four hours.

Sid grabs Marty by the hair, revealing his gold stud earring.

SID (cont'd)

Fourteen or eighteen?

MARTY

What?

SID

Your earring. Fourteen or Eighteen carats?

MARTY

Oh fuck, it's cheap. Fourteen?

SID

Yeah? Looks like eighteen. Joe Joe.

With his thumb and forefinger, Joe Joe yanks the earring from Marty's ear. Right through the lobe!

Marty collapses in a heap. Joe Joe hands the earring to Sid.

SID (cont'd)

Looks like eighteen. Good. Sixty *six* hundred. See ya tomorrow, kid.

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