

Channel 49
EASTER PARTY



A televangelist, a powerful politician, a femme fatale media-personality --get what they want...

The flavor of the film (screenplay) is 'dark' comedy and the medium of choice would be black & white. The effect desired is one of reality (cinema verite') mixed with a deft exaggeration of style and character without being heavy-handed. The method is CAMERA as WITNESS and the film hopefully will be one of humor and substance.

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EASTER PARTY

(The Return Of Jesus)

-theFILM

Key: INT. means Interior scene, EXT. means Exterior

VO means voice over the picture.

*M.O.S. = Dialogue not audible. Supposedly from an early, German-American film director's instruction: 'Mit (sic) out sound.'

Some time ago, in a nearly parallel universe...

INT. DAY PRIVATE OFFICE, '...MEDIA TELEVISION'

CONNIE, her sensuality unruffled, completes one phone conversation (M.O.S.) and initiates another. MUSIC. TITLES begin.

INT. DAY SMALL, CLUTTERED LIBRARY ROOM

STANLEY, examining a film-strip pauses to answer his phone. Awkwardly he knocks several manuscript pages to the floor. HE seems personable and intelligent though nervous. TITLES completes

INT. DAY LONG (WINDOWED) AIRPORT WALKWAY

Jet engine WHINE is HEARD. -CONNIE'S provocative shape is accompanied by STANLEY carrying a travel-bag. BOTH are followed dutifully by MARVIN the CAMERA-MAN who videographs this walk, focusing on CONNIE'S behind. A carnival-MUSIC interlude illustrates the comical tone of this procession.

EXT. DAY PALATIAL ESTATE

STANLEY pauses on a walkway approaching the house,

STAN

This is where Reverend Willy lives?

CONNIE

Sometimes. C'mon.

STAN

The wages of fighting sin are not humble- pie

CONNIE

Marvin...

(looks behind her)

Oh you shameless pig, Get a shot
of the house.

MARVIN tapes the house.

CONNIE

Give me the microphone.

You (Stan) come next to me,

Back a step, don't block the light.

STANLEY accepts CONNIE'S direction.

CONNIE

Start with just me,

--then zoom out a little.

Do you have the background?

--Are you ready?

(pauses)

Now?

CONNIE'S demeanor softens.

CONNIE

The nation's most prominent religious
leader, the televangelist Reverend
Clairbolt Willy, mentor and confidant to our
President has often said that too...

STAN

(interrupting)

Excuse me, are you going to ask me
something? I'm not prepared...

CONNIE

KER-IST!

(to Marvin)

Just get a shot of the house.

STAN

This isn't live is it?

CONNIE

No. Let's get inside.

STAN

(walking)

Why does he want to see me?

CONNIE

(walking)

To save you.

SHE stops and faces STANLEY

CONNIE

He'll probably make you an offer.

STANLEY LAUGHS gently, MARVIN surveys the grounds. A close cropped, plain-clothes SECURITY MAN stands in the sun. His eyes display an animal-like curiosity bereft of higher intelligence. The SECURITY MAN leans over and shoves a stick into an anthill, HE grins slightly. MARVIN walks to the house.

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Channel 49

Easter Party... Continued

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INT. LATE AFTERNOON WILLY'S SPACIOUS STUDY

WILLY relaxes at his desk. STAN sits more stiffly nearby.

SHADOWS mask WILLY'S expression.

WILLY

Some gal that Connie's A do-er.

STAN

A do-er. Have you known her long?

WILLY

Friend-of-a-friend.

(smiles)

Friend of Roy's.

STAN

The President?

WILLY

The very same.

Connie is his favorite media-person.

So, I like her too.

STAN

Uh huh.. I...

WILLY

You should like her also.

STAN

I... uh...

WILLY

No use in doing those educational films.

Dealing in perversity.

WILLY moves from the shadows into SUNLIGHT. He smiles pleasantly.

WILLY

Show me what you got...

STAN

The slides are all set up, but maybe

first I should tell you...

WILLY

How ever you want to do it.

WILLY sits on the edge of his desk, folds his arms across his chest and waits patiently.

STAN

Christianity comes from two basic sources.

The Judaic representing Jesus and the Hellenistic

world of the Gentiles...

WILLY nods his head slightly.

INT. LATE AFTERNOON GUEST SUITE

CONNIE does her nails as she talks on the phone. MARVIN sits in a corner and wipes his CAMERA with a handkerchief.

CONNIE

(on phone)

Are you sure you don't
mind talking on a car-phone?

(laughs)

How close are you?

(blows on her nails)

Hope my nails are dry by then.

INT. LATE AFTERNOON STUDY

A SLIDE is being projected on the wall that portrays a group of people wearing MASKS as they sit around a person laying in their midst.

WILLY

What is this?!

STAN

A representation of the ancient Mithraist
mystery religion's communion meal for
initiates. The Mithraic fellowship sits around
the initiate wearing the masks of their rank
and the Pater or Father offers the bread with
the sun-cross of Mithras

WILLY

What corruption.

STAN

The bread represented
the god's symbolic flesh.

WILLY

It's pagan nonsense. It's theater!

STAN

They practiced the cummunio mystica,
transubstantiation, imitatio deus, made the
day of the sun a holy day, and gave us
Christmas, originally the Natalis
Solis Invicti, a solstice celebration.

WILLY

Are you talking English?

STAN

I'm trying to.

WILLY

Jesus Christ gave us Christianity and not
those heathens. They're nothing but bloody pagans. Homos!

STAN

The pagans gave us the days of our week;
Sun's day, Moon's day, Thor's day,
Wodin's day, Frig's day, Saturn's day...

WILLY

You got them out of order, unless
your week is different than mine.

WILLY sits behind his desk. He thinks a moment and becomes more relaxed.

WILLY

Our Christmas holiday is not a solar holiday.

STAN

Solstice... Of course not, it was
subsumed into Christianity.

WILLY

Sub-sUmed? I don't believe that word is in
my country-boy's vocabulary...
Maybe you ought to just stick
to the gospel's account.

STAN

Which one? John presents an enigmatic
almost weird Christ...

WILLY puts his forefinger forward in anger but relents.

WILLY

Look you're a smart boy. Perhaps like Paul
driven mad with great learning.

WILLY leaves his chair and strides about the room.

WILLY

We're kind of in the same business you and me;
COMMUNICATION. Right?
--I've got millions of folks
DEVOTED to watching me. Devoted.
And we're just getting started, here.
--A clever fellow could go far in this organization.
Knowledge of media is critical
to getting the word out.
The word, Stanley, the word.
Not this here speculative rumination.

WILLY shudders at the SLIDE and changes it. The next SLIDE is of a JEWISH-LOOKING fellow wearing a tunic.

WILLY

Who's this actor supposed to be, Moses?

STAN

Jesus.

WILLY shakes his head and turns the projector off.

WILLY

Connie was right in getting
us together before it's too late.

WILLY smiles.

INT. LATE AFTERNOON HALLWAY

CONNIE strides down a corridor. Her dress clings to the contours of her body. She examines her nails to see if they are fully dry.

INT. LATE AFTERNOON STUDY

WILLY

I want you to spend the weekend here with us.
I'm hoping we can talk some more about some new
project you might undertake...

STANLEY stands and begins to shake his head.

WILLY

Because this (*points to screen*) could
get you crucified. (*smiles*) --By me.

(*laughs*)

Well, I got to work on my Easter message...

STAN

I can't resist; --Do you know the origination
of the word 'Easter'

WILLY regards him coolly.

STAN

From Eastore the pagan goddess of
Spring; coming from the eastern dawn...

WILLY's eyes narrow.

WILLY

You are a divisive person.

STAN

I believe...

WILLY

(upbeat)

But at least you're sharing that
with ME. I appreciate that.

STAN

(small voice)

I believe in the truth,

WILLY

So do I, but the truth has got to accomplish something.

It can't be just empty wisdom.

--Let me tell you something boy, What do you see on
every street corner in America, huh?

STAN

Convenience stores?

WILLY

Bars and churches. Bars and churches; the world,
my friend is as awash in evil as it is in churches.

You want to empty those churches in

order to fill up those bars?

STAN

No.

WILLY scowls as he prepares to depart the room.

WILLY

I don't either. I intend to--

STAN

Yes?

WILLY

(smiling)

To fill those churches up.

Fill MY church up all around
this great and wonderful country.

--You don't think that's worthy?

STAN

Soliciting for contributions?

Living here?

WILLY

How dare you.

WILLY approaches STANLEY with vehemence.

WILLY

Ingrate! Don't you think the
Lord gives things to HIS people?

STAN

Houses, cars, planes?

WILLY

Yes,

STAN

No I don't.

The fury subsides in WILLY.

WILLY

That wealth and power is
going to be used for
something, boy. Believe me.

STAN

Can I get a cab to the airport?

WILLY

(hospitable)

You ain't going to no airport. Relax. There's big doings
going on. When your visit is over my limo will bring you.

Oh, I get mad, but the love of the Lord cools me down.

You're a reasonable man. We'll talk.

(smiles warmly)

I'll convince you not to make a mistake.

WILLY shakes STAN's hand.

WILLY

I've got a very important
guest to greet and a sermon
that won't wait. Please excuse me.

STAN

I'll hang around.

WILLY

Good, good. Make yourself at home.

Use my library.

Plenty of good books here.

WILLY leaves the room. STANLEY watches several of his slides, shrugs and browses among WILLY's BOOKS. HE opens a few.

STAN

Virgin bindings...

Two dozen bibles that

have never been opened..

Yeah, what am I doing here?

STANLEY takes a Bible with him as he leaves the study.

INT. EVENING AUDITORIUM

STANLEY enters a small Auditorium from the stage wings. The dark interior is lit by one SPOT LIGHT near the edge of the stage. HE sits in the SPOTLIGHT and dangles his feet over the edge.

STAN

Hello out there.

A WOMAN wearing an apron enters through the main doors and approaches the stage by the aisle.

STAN

Hi.

WOMAN

Hello. I'm Alma, --the cook.

STAN

Hi.

ALMA

Are you Stanley?

STAN

Yes I am.

ALMA

What are you doing there?

STAN

(w/Bible. Reading.)

--I'm a religious comedian
looking for appropriate inspiration.

ALMA

Have you found any?

STAN

Wells let's sees..

(leafs through Bible)

There's always this curious passage, Mark 3:21...

--It seems that Jesus had left his house to perform
a healing and got worked up enough to give his
family alarm. They thought he had gone out of his mind.

So they yanked him back into the house.

'Knock-knock,

(woman's voice)

Who's there?

(Dumb-guy's voice)

Uh, it's me Peter Simonstone, you know, 'Rocky'

--can Jesus come out now, we got some more healin' to do.

(woman's voice)

A doctor you're not; what's the matter,
fishing's too good for you? You'll get
my Jesus into big trouble always egging
him on, 'Give us a sign, give us a sign'...

STANLEY chuckles.

STAN

Do you ever read this book?

(Bible)

ALMA

Morning, noon and night.

STAN

What do you think?

ALMA

I don't think, only read it.

I wouldn't make fun of it.

STAN

Oh no. –I'm not being vicious. I identify with Jesus,
lost causes, uphill struggles...And my family thinks

I'm crazy also.

ALMA

Are you hungry? Would you like
a baloney sandwich or maybe a lobster?

STAN

Baloney sandwich or lobster, huh?

ALMA

We got several crates in this
morning. Cooks up quickly.

STAN

I'll hold off.

Worked for Reverend Willy long?

ALMA

Oh yeah.

If you won't be eating I'm gonna go now.

Always strange things happen around the
Spring Equinox. I'm going to go out and have a look,
--Maybe a shooting star. Maybe something;
you never know.

STAN

No. you don't.

According to another Bible story, the
prophet Elijah was bodily assumed into
the heavens aboard a flaming chariot
caught up in a whirlwind... 'WOOOSH!'

(launches hand as rocket)

--An interstellar space craft.

ALMA

Uh huh.

STAN

The Jewish tradition holds that Elijah will return
on Passover to announce the Messianic arrival.

ALMA

Passover begins soon.

STAN

Tonight.

(smiles)

Yes indeed, and you know, if Elijah was traveling in an
interstellar draft at light speed he would only age about
20 years over our last 2900...

ALMA

Are you really crazy or is this part

of your routine?

STAN

Interesting huh?

ALMA

I'll know interesting when I see it.

STAN

I wish you luck.

ALMA nods and exits. STANLEY sits, grinning absently.

EXT. NIGHT ESTATE GROUNDS

P.O.V. The CAMERA floats low over the ground traveling QUIETLY along dark macadam walkways terraced with bushes and enters an expanse of garden and grass-land.

In a pocket of space borrowed from nature, several interlopers are surprised. They are either children dressed in costume or perhaps mirthful alien BEINGS who interrupt their play and point a direction for the CAMERA to follow. (*Note: Point Of View gives the impression that the scene is a person's view*)

Continuing with more haste the CAMERA discovers persons, isolated from each other and standing as still-lives under LIGHTING from ornate street lamps. There is the cook ALMA, wearing her apron and transfixed two dimensionally. However, as the CAMERA draws closer SHE smiles slightly and her EYES follow. Next is a SECURITY AIDE with a walkie-talkie a dozen yards behind ALMA. HE raises his radio in SLOW MOTION. His EYES follow the CAMERA'S movement but he does not smile.

The CAMERA pauses before a busy DRIVE-WAY cut into a sloping hill on the far side of WILLY'S ESTATE.

Other AIDES and SECURITY PERSONNEL, bristling with radios and urgency convey an importance to the scene. As the CAMERA moves amongst them there is a BLACK OUT as an AIDE intercepts and FOCUS is lost in the closeness of HIS CHEST.

INT. NIGHT WILLY'S HOUSE

The CAMERA'S P.O.V. is resumed inside the service entrance as it finds CONNIE the media-personality and MARVIN her videographer.

Only MARVIN becomes aware of an outside presence and turns quickly to focus his CAMCORDER LENS on it.

CUT TO

A MAN'S FACE with a beard. Woeful eyes. (HE resembles the second slide of Stanley's presentation). The silent HANDS of AIDES gently lead him into another room,

AIDE V.0.

(hushed)

I'm sorry, you'll have to wait.

They aren't ready yet.

A joyous Reverend WILLY opens another door and gains CONNIE's attention.

WILLY

President Goodboy's here.

PRESIDENT GOODBOY emerges from behind WILLY. He is wired with energy and confidence.

CONNIE

Roy.

ROY GOODBOY

Howdy darlin'

ROY winks and plants a chaste kiss on CONNIE's cheek..

ROY

Hear you've planned some fireworks

for us.

CONNIE

Little ol' me?

WILLY

Some mish-mash of peculiar

blaspheme to be nipped in the bud.

I'll say she's got an explosion in mind.

CONNIE

(w/ intended innuendo)

Who says I'm planning an explosion.

ROY

(thrilled)

Don't say that in front of my pastor, darlin'.

WILLY I didn't hear nothin'. I want you to meet this unregenerate, actually he's a bright, maybe even useful fellow.

ROY

Oww! Come-on Will, I don't get out much any more. When I do it's old friends. I'd like to PARTY!

(laughs)

WILLY

I hear ya. But you do need some prayer and contemplation too.

WILLY leads them toward another part of the house. ROY pats CONNIE'S backside as they walk.

ROY

Of course.

Oooo, nice spread there.

CONNIE

Watch your hand don't burn off, I'm hot stuff.

ROY

(laughing)

Don't I know it. Wooee!

EXT. NIGHT HIGHWAY

A VAN travels the night byways. Foreboding MUSIC plays. Raucous, barely intelligible LANGUAGE is HEARD.

MALE-VOICE-OVER

Bootem'-ina-ass...

INT. NIGHT VAN

A GROUP of racists in jolly spirits bounce around in the cargo bed chugging malt-liquor and smoking joints. Many have tattoos on their hands and ONE has a knife drawn on his FACE.

The DRIVER takes a curve HARD (tires SQUEAL) while swallowing ten ounces of alcoholic beverage. This causes much LAUGHTER from the group.

EXT. NIGHT ESTATE GROUNDS

ALMA gives up her search for the unusual and returns to the house. She passes the SECURITY AIDE with the radio who gains her attention with a shoulder tap. ALMA is surprised.

ALMA

Yes?

SECURITY AIDE

Weird night, huh?

ALMA

Maybe...

SECURITY AIDE

Kind of a night when you expect
'terrorist activity'.

The SECURITY AIDE grins.

ALMA

Oh I don't know. Kind of a
hopefully weird night.

SECURITY AIDE

What's your name, ma'am?

ALMA

It's Alma. I'm the cook.

SECURITY AIDE

On this night I'm called number four.
If you're asking yourself, why on this night...

ALMA

-I know why. I've been through
this before.

SECURITY AIDE

Then you know it can get pretty lonely
out here waiting for what can happen...

ALMA

It can get pretty lonely waiting.

Yes it can. -

SECURITY AIDE

Sometimes I get real hungry, Alma.

ALMA nods.

ALMA

I know what you mean.

SECURITY AIDE

Can you take care of that hunger?

ALMA

I could try, couldn't I?

SECURITY AIDE

Thank you.

--Boy, I'm glad we had this talk.

ALMA

Me too. Shame a whole crate of
lobsters should go to waste. Chicken too.

SECURITY AIDE

I like chicken. I could eat a mess of chicken.

ALMA

(flirtatious smile)

You will.

INT. NIGHT WILLY'S RECREATION LOUNGE

CONNIE, ROY and WILLY are already loosened up. ROY insists in pouring another drink for Willy. The THREE are LAUGHING.

WILLY

C'mon Roy, that's enough.

ROY

Horse-shit, you ain't no Baptist...

WILLY

I got work to do,

--What if there's a national emergency?

ROY

That's my problem.

Where's the ice, darlin'?

CONNIE pushes the ice-bucket forward.

CONNIE

(to Roy)

It certainly isn't in your veins.

ROY

Hear that? This girl will be the death of me, yet.

WILLY

Seriously, what if something happens?

ROY

Nothin's gonna happen. The world is quiet.
Everybody everywhere is behaven' themselves.
In their dachas or in their mosques, with their
mistresses or boyfriends. I got this doped.

Drink up.

WILLY

What if a meteor comes...

CONNIE

A what?

ROY

Will you listen to this guy.

Somethin' like that happens -- you gonna
have to pray for us, Reverend.

WILLY accepts the drink.

WILLY

That's what I mean, the Lord's business won't wait.

I got a sermon to tape... I don't like to drink too
near camera-time.

ROY

Oh Jeeze...

ROY is momentarily taken back with nostalgic recollections.

ROY

You know when I first met this guy...

WILLY

A life-time ago.

CONNIE

(eager)

Uh huh?

ROY

I was a wet-nosed... No more than a kid.

Runnin' for... was it state senate?

WILLY

Or county office...

ROY

And this guy-was trying to haggle fifteen
minutes of local TV time.

WILLY

Now I got a television studio in my house.

CONNIE

Which of you sold your soul...

WILLY

Whoa. Hey...

ROY

(laughing)

That's why I like her so much.

Tolerates very little bullshit.

CONNIE

But you can trust me.

ROY

Oh yeah.

WILLY

No ma'am, We got to where we are
with the help of the Lord.

ROY

(drinking)

Yes! Help of the help of...

WILLY

The Lord.

ROY

And some other help.

WILLY

Can I help it if Roy Goodboy was the
hand-picked chosen of the...

ROY

We're all tied in there. Me, you, her.

CONNIE

Me?

ROY

Sure, everyone has a role to play.

CONNIE

What's mine?

ROY kisses her hand.

ROY

To make me happy.

WILLY

Maybe you've already played it.

Bringin' that Stanley to me.

CONNIE

Oh him. I want an interview out of this.

ROY

Yeah, what's that all about?

WILLY

Has some notions that could possibly get
some people to think the wrong way.
But he's smart. 'Learned' as they say.

ROY

(concerned)

Then ignore him. Don't give him
any soap box...

WILLY

Why not have him do
things the right way; for us?

WILLY puts his glass up to toast. ROY accepts.

ROY

All right. You ain't been wrong yet.

CONNIE joins their toast. Smiling into each other's EYES they drink

INT. NIGHT HALLWAY

MARVIN videotapes the closed doors that line the corridor he is in. A SECURITY AIDE stands outside the door in which ROY, WILLY and CONNIE are in. MARVIN waits patiently in front of this door.

SECURITY AIDE 2

Can't go in there, Mac.

MARVIN videotapes the AIDE's impassive FACE in extreme CLOSEUP. Suddenly an image comes into his head. MARVIN glances to his side. CAMERA DOLLIES back and LIFTS UPWARD. A strange MUSIC plays.

CUT TO

EXT. NIGHT ESTATE GROUNDS

The CHILD-BEINGS play. MARVIN joins them. THEY dance in a circle while holding hands. LAUGHTER.

CUT BACK TO

INT. NIGHT HALLWAY

MARVIN's mind's-eye returns to his camera.

SECURITY AIDE 2

(getting annoyed)

Maybe you should find something else to do...

The DOOR behind the SECURITY MAN opens. CONNIE leans out.

CONNIE

So there you are, Get in here,
just don't get in Roy's way.

MARVIN follows focus on the annoyed Security Aide as he backs into the LOUNGE.

INT. NIGHT RECREATION LOUNGE

ROY and WILLY are LAUGHING. CONNIE is also mirthful.

ROY

Whoa, that boy ain't gonna take
my picture like this here.

CONNIE

Of course not. Give me some credit.

WILLY

So why's he here?

ROY

To record for posterity the number
of times you visit the John,,,

(laughs)

CONNIE

He gets lonely by himself.

ROY

Well so do I.

CONNIE opens her arms.

CONNIE

Then come here.

ROY drifts across the room and embraces CONNIE. They dance slowly together with no music.

ROY

Love the smell of your hair.

WILLY shakes his head. MARVIN videotapes WILLY, till the latter ducks out of the lens.

WILLY

Pointin' that thing at me like
this makes me nervous.

ROY

Don't that boy drink?

CONNIE

Marv. Relax.

WILLY

Help yourself.

MARVIN lifts a bottle of vodka and takes several snorts without setting the camera down.

WILLY

I appreciate a man who's
so devoted to duty...

ROY begins to kiss CONNIE's neck.

WILLY

Maybe we ought to open this party up.

ROY

What did you have in mind, partner?

WILLY

I had some entertainment planned, at
somebody-else's expense, just as you like.

ROY

(taking an interest)

Say what?

WILLY

Le'mme bring down that Stanley fellow...

ROY

Shit.

WILLY

I don't take trifling with what I do laying down..

And nor should YOU.

CONNIE

Bring him down.

ROY

(to Connie)

What's he about?

CONNIE

A book reader, documentary producer.

ROY

Ever work with him?

CONNIE

Research once...

ROY

All right.

WILLY picks up his house phone,

WILLY

(on phone)

Clairbolt here. Yeah...

Send that Stanley down
here ... and the actor too.

(chuckles)

We might have some fun.

ROY rubs the palms of his hands along CONNIE's arms.

ROY

If I want some fun I know where
to get it.

WILLY

If I don't turn away more stuff... Hell if I didn't
I'd be twelve hours a day in bed with bimbos
--- present company excepted --- But, bein' a
preachin' man does have its toll.

CONNIE

I don' mind bein' a bimbo if the
price is right...

ROY

He wasn't talkin' about you, darlin'.

Besides you're MY bimbo.

CONNIE

It's not what you do, it's how much you do it
for that's important. Right?

ROY

Absolutely.

EXT. NIGHT ESTATE GROUNDS

POV CAMERA approaches SECURITY AIDE (Number 4) from behind. HE turns And finds ALMA.

ALMA

My stove is getting hot.

AIDE

All right!

ALMA

I'll be feeding you soon.

AIDE

I'm counting on it.

INT. NIGHT LOUNGE

STANLEY steps into the lounge and is videotaped by MARVIN.

ROY

Go get him, rover.

CONNIE

Back off Marvin.

WILLY

(to Stan)

Find any good readin' in my study.

STAN

Only the Bible... Is that? *(Of Roy)*

ROY

Yes it is, boy. Come in here, let
me get a good look at you.

ROY inspects STANLEY.

ROY

Is this here a threat?

(laughs)

WILLY

It's in what he does,

STAN

What do I do?

CONNIE

Fix a drink, Willy don't like
your subject material.

STAN nods to Roy as he goes to the bar and makes a drink.

STAN

My subject material?... Well I've done
'This is Hinduism'. A series on Buddhism ...

I'm avoiding Islam for obvious
reasons... I have a pilot on
Judaism; 3700 years of history...

Why shouldn't I continue?

WILLY

Because you got to approach it from
the inside.

STAN

Why?

WILLY

Because we're all insiders here.

ROY

Aw, hell, people don't want to know
where things come from anyway.
They just want to feel good about themselves.

WILLY

There's more to, it than that.

ROY

(to Stan)

And there's more to it than that,

(to Connie)

But isn't that true? I don't want to know
the significance of anything ...
All my predecessors were God-fearin' men.

STAN

That's not so. Jefferson, Lincoln even Washington
could not be classified as traditionalists...

WILLY

Roy here is of a better breed.

ROY

That's so.

(laughs)

Didn't think so, did ya?

CONNIE

My Roy certainly is. He's alive for one thing.

ROY

Yes I am.

WILLY

Thought maybe you could demonstrate
some of your theories for *us*...

STAN

(laughs)

Enact the film by myself?

WILLY

(slyly)

I've got that actor of yours, that Jewish Jesus.

(smirks)

ROY

A what?

WILLY

(laughing)

That's right, a Jewish Jesus.

STAN

Where's the joke? You folks know
a Danish Jesus?

ROY

(laughing)

If that don't beat all!

WILLY

See? Liberalism, doubt, science-ism...

(to Stan)

--See, Roy and me can't have our
finely laid out plans to re-unite this nation
through one faith upset by certain
kosher-Hebrew notions about the
separation of cheese and steak.

ROY roars with laughter. The ACTOR (in costume) enters.

WILLY

(to Actor)

Have your material?

STAN

I don't think I care for what's going on here.

CONNIE shrugs.

ACTOR

What do you wish?

WILLY

Do what he (*Stan*) tol' ya.

STAN

We've never met before.

INT. NIGHT KITCHEN

ALMA animatedly prepares a great deal of food. She HUMS.

ALMA

(made-up song)

Ima-Alma; and Ima cookin'

... cookin' for my man.

SHE shuffles a dance step and slings her hips and shoulders back as she moves between table and stove.

ALMA

Cookin' for my man...

(Hums)

EXT. NIGHT HIGHWAY

The VAN is parked on the shoulder of the road. The ROWDIES stand about BELCHING and URINATING. A CAR approaches, its HEADLIGHTS begin to LIGHT a swath that approaches them. THEY wave their beer-bottles and SHOUT obscenities at the oncoming TRAFFIC.

The Car OCCUPANTS, a middle-aged couple cringes.

INT. NIGHT LOUNGE

WILLY

What do you mean, you've never met;

wasn't he in that slide?

STAN approaches the Actor

and examines the fabric of his tunic.

STAN

Where did you get such a realistic
costume? Hi, I'm Stanley.

Awkwardly, the Actor and Stanley shake hands.

ACTOR

I'm Yeshu.

ROY

You're what? Sounded like he sneezed.

ACTOR

A contraction of Yehoshua.

ROY

(toasting w/drink)

Well, Yairs-hoo-ya...

(drinks)

WILLY

(concerned)

Oh my gosh, I may have committed a
security violation.

ROY

Relax, if he's in this part of the building he's
been searched. Those boys know their job.

WILLY

(w/distaste)

But he is foreign...

ROY

Get ya a drink. What are they gonna
do for use dance a dervish?

(laughs)

Feel like dancin'?

--Anybody?

CONNIE volunteers. SHE and ROY shuffle together closely.

WILLY

(to Stan)

See, I got a second; a THIRD rate
Staff. They couldn't tell an Israeli
from a Mexican. Got me the wrong Jew.

ROY

Fill your glass Willy and give
one to Jose. You know, Yers-hoo.

WILLY

(to Actor)

Drink?

ACTOR

No thank you.

CONNIE

Maybe he's a Baptist.

ACTOR

No. John was the Baptist. He came not eating
or drinking, yet still they thought him crazy.
Of me, some even said I was a wine-biber...

ROY

(chuckles)

Good, I don't trust a man who never
takes a drink.

WILLY seems perplexed.

WILLY

You ain't getting the full drift,

Roy. They're gospel lines.

STAN

He's in character... --From Yeshu in the
Aramaic language came Yesous in Greek

and Yeses in Latin....

WILLY

Jesus in English...

STAN

(to Actor)

I appreciate a well-researched role.

(searches in pocket)

Let me see if I have a business card on me...

WILLY

(concerned)

Hey enough of this. Christians love
their Lord and don't take to mockery.

All look at WILLY. MARVIN begins videotaping again.

WILLY

Maybe I've had enough to drink.

ROY

Hey don't you spoil this party.

WILLY waves Roy off. ROY dances over toward WILLY, breaking with Connie at the last moment.

ROY

Perk up, Rally, damn you.

WILLY smiles and he and ROY clasp hands and LAUGH.

EXT. NIGHT ESTATE GROUNDS

P.O.V. SECURITY AIDE's back. Someone approaches. It's ALMA bearing a steaming plate of FRIED CHICKEN.

ALMA

(smiling mysteriously)

I want you should eat.

SECURITY AIDE (#4) reaches to her plate of chicken, secures a large piece and bites into it. HE chews.

ALMA

Eat hardy.

HE eats the piece voraciously in several huge bites dropping the remainder.

AIDE 4

(mouth full)

It's go-ood!

HE swallows.

AIDE 4

Real good...

ALMA

Have more. Have as much as you like.

AIDE 4

You eat?

ALMA

I eat last.

AIDE 4

(disappointed)

But my hand's all greasy. I could drop
my radio... or my gun. --Have a taste.

AIMA seizes HIS hand by the wrist and brings it to her mouth. SHE licks his hands and

purrs.

AIDE 4

Folks can see us like this, eatin' on duty.

THEY-back up toward the bushes near the house. ALMA still holds the tray.

INT. NIGHT LOUNGE

STANLEY and the ACTOR have seated themselves on a couch. ROY and CONNIE lean together by the bar with WILLY an arm's length from ROY. MARVIN stands mid-floor with his camera seemingly confused by the lack of center this party displays. ROY and WILLY seem to be inebriated.

ROY

Willy, do some shots wi' me?

--Yeah, c'mon. Line 'em up...

CONNIE tugs on ROY's shoulder from the other side.

CONNIE

(suggestive)

Sure that's what you want to be doin'?

--It'll put a fix on the rest of the night.

WILLY

Listen to her.

ROY

Just one shot, then...with a beer chaser.

--Set 'em up. See if I can't out-guzzle this preacher.

WILLY

I'm out of practice.

ROY

You're out of practice. Think I can behave this way at official dinners? Jesus, they have me drinkin' Kool Aid.

--Or ginger ale.

(makes a face)

ROY spies STANLEY and the ACTOR.

ROY

Hey you two. Get into this. No sittin'
around jawin' about such and such.

Drink up.

STAN

(raising glass)

I'm working on it.

ROY

You drink like a baby.

My little sister could out-drink you when
she was fourteen.. Out screw you. God...

WILLY

(sharply)

ROY!

ROY

She was no damn good.

CONNIE

(interested)

I want to hear about this.

WILLY

Nothin' there.

ROY

A long time ago...

CONNIE

Did you...?

ROY pauses.

WILLY

Not in front of these peoples

ROY

(looking sorrowful)

She was no damn good.

WILLY

ROY!

ROY claps his hands.

ROY

We need a party to cook here!

WILLY

That's the spirit!

CONNIE watches ROY's movements. She puts her hand on his arm.

CONNIE

Did you ever...

ROY

What? Screw my no good sister?

WILLY

(to Connie)

Young lady...

ROY

No, the question is exactly what kind of poor,
white trash was I before I became somebody.
How old was I when I got my first pair of boots?

ROY turns to STAN and the ACTOR.

ROY

Would either of you ever screw your
sister? Under any conditions?

STAN

I don't have a sister.

ROY

But would you?

WILLY

That's enough, Roy.

CONNIE

Roy, I'm sorry, hon... Please...

STAN

(joking)

Not if she looked like me.

ROY

(laughs)

That's a good answer.

Jose, how about you?

ACTOR

Asking that question answers it;

answering it asks it.

It's clearly not right.

Love is too precious to betray...

ROY

What kind of a...

(to others)

Do you hear this ... this bull...?

(laughs)

What do know about love? Don't folks in your country have a whole bunch of wives, or something?

(laughs)

ACTOR

Love is an expression from God...

(reflects)

While it's the only thing worth
having it can't be owned,
but it can be given.

(touches self)

God gives it to people to give to
other people.

ROY

Do you hear this?

The ACTOR rises and approaches ROY.

CONNIE

Love is never having to say,
'Get off me', because I'm on top.

ACTOR

(to Roy)

Believe me ... when you are at the end of your days only those who you have loved and the ones who have loved you --will be of any importance.

All other is trivia, vanity gone with the wind.

STAN

I'm speechless really.

WILLY

Then, why are you talking?

STAN

To break the ice.

STAN joins the Actor and pats him approvingly on the back.

ROY

I'll drink to that.

WILLY

(to Actor)

So. Mr... Yes-who?

STAN

Call him Jesus.

(to Actor)

If that's okay with you?

ACTOR

(jokingly)

What would my Mother think, a Jewish
boy with a Latin, a ROMAN name?

STAN

(kidding in woman's voice)

Oy, my Yeshila...

WILLY

Yes-who or...

ROY

(interjecting)

Jose,

WILLY

--Jose will have to do.

ACTOR

Fine. Yes, your question?

WILLY pauses to gather his equilibrium.

WILLY

Interesting several words, a moment ago.

What is it that you believe?

ACTOR

I believe?

Hear Oh Israel, the LORD is our God; the

LORD is One...

ROY

(snorts)

Not exactly an opening line for your

Easter message, Will.

STAN

May I respectfully remind you, Reverend,

but that line which originates in Deuteronomy is repeated in the Gospel of Mark...

(thinks)

12:29 I believe...

WILLY

(w/annoyance)

Thank you Stanley. Without your
brilliance where would I be today?

ROY LAUGHS.

ACTOR

--Love of God; love of neighbor...

What is there besides the Fatherhood of God,
and brotherhood of Man?

ROY

How about --REALITY?

(snickers)

WILLY

Roy, c'mon now, he's just reminded
us of our Savior's two commandments...

(to Actor)

If only you could accept Christ...

The everlasting grace brought by the blood he shed...

ACTOR

(wryly)

This is a hard saying, who can understand it?

STAN

Reverend Willy, for a moment
there I sensed true piety...

WILLY

Did you think I was an atheist?

STAN

An opportunist, A performer.

WILLY

(to Roy)

Give a twerp a couple of drinks,
and he'll say anything.

STAN

(laughs)

Actually all of us here, or most of us
are creatures of television. --Think about it.

CONNIE

I do every day. Ratings and shares

(uplifts her glass)

Gentlemen to the MEDIA!

ALL, including MARVIN, (save the ACTOR) drink to this toast.

ROY

Bottoms up.

ROY tries to chug the drink, A stream of it runs down the side of his face. WILLY
LAUGHS.

ACTOR

I've had a very long trip.

Is there a place to lie
down for a short while?

WILLY points to a door.

WILLY

Right through there is a guest-room.

Make yourself to home.

ROY

Aw, is Jose leaving us?

(to Willy)

Do you think he'd diddle his sister?

WILLY

(concerned)

Roy...

WILLY holds ROY's arms The ACTOR nods to all and opens the door.

ROY

Yes, Will?

WILLY

I'm worried about you.

--How you bearin' up?

ROY

Fine, fine.

--You know, about that Jose...

I can size a man up pretty quickly...

I knew from the get-go that he had that un-shrewd,
obsessive quality ... that in-born notion of total
sincerity that is of such little use in our world...

WILLY

(laughs)

Absolutely. Absolutely.

ROY

Drink up everybody We gonna get down to it!

Yeeha! Yahoo! Whoop-whoop-whoopie!

ROY takes CONNIE by the waist and pulls her close to him.

EXT. NIGHT ESTATE GROUNDS

ALMA shakes fried chicken crumbs from her apron and dress. The mostly-consumed remains of several pieces of chicken rest alongside a few whole pieces on the tray that sits upon the ground. ALMA hums as she picks up the tray,

EXT. NIGHT HIGHWAY

The VAN full of ROWDIES is underway again.

INT. NIGHT GUEST ROOM *OFF LOUNGE*

The ACTOR lays amid shadows,-his eyes open. The revelry from the lounge can be HEARD.

ROY (V.O.)

Nobody's seen a temptress like
you, babe...

CONNIE (V.O.)

I'm savin' it all up for you, hon.

ROY (V.O.)

This gal's got an answer for everything.

(laughs)

INT. NIGHT LOUNGE

ROY tries to entice CONNIE into his lap.

ROY

C'mon. Come to Daddy!

Teasingly SHE squirms into his lap and rises to step away, pose and try again.

ROY

Ride 'em, cow-girl! Yahoo!

WILLY finishes his current drink.

WILLY

(to Stan)

You disapprove?

STAN

Personally, I'm not a hypocrite.

WILLY

That boy there (Roy) has a lot on his mind.

Unbelievable pressures.

It's healthy to see him unwind.

STAN watches ROY slapping at CONNIE's hunched-over buttocks as MARVIN searches for the best angle to put the camera too.

ROY

Gidiap-gidiap! Go-go-go! YA!

STAN

(to Willy)

Yeah.

CONNIE settles into ROY's lap.

CONNIE

(to Marv)

It's okay, hon. I'm all right...

SHE turns and kisses ROY.

WILLY

(to Stan)

How about you and I have a little chat ...

before I get too.. too happy?

STAN

Sure.

WILLY

That, project of yours will never do.

It makes us look like bloody pagans.

It raises too many questions.

STAN

How many people do you think would

see it? Do you think legions are

flocking to studies of comparative religion?

WILLY

(forcefully)

Two people won't see it, because it won't be made.

--What ever's invested in it...don't fret,

you'll get it out, I guarantee YOU.

I'm a business-minded person, I'm no *fool*.

--You'll make a new project.

A better one, with more dough behind you.

Willy-Missions money, and plenty of it.

I've seen what you can do in your other projects...

You can be good. Oh so talented...

STAN

Why do I feel the devil's talking to me?

WILLY

You can feel-how you want... --You don't have
to like me. You think I'm a pile of pitiful vanity?

--Shit, I would have come to nothing
as such...A shoe salesman.

Yeah, laugh if you want. A shoe.
salesman ... But I have a calling...

I felt it then, and I feel it now...

STAN

Maybe I don't fit into such great plans.

WILLY

Maybe you do. Think on it.

EXT. NIGHT ESTATE GROUNDS

SECURITY AIDE Number FOUR stands with his radio in the still night. His POCKETS are bulging. A strained and odd LAUGH escapes him. He tries to stifle this chortle but can only contain it momentarily. Soon it is HEARD.

INT. NIGHT KITCHEN

ALMA prepares LOBSTERS for steaming. HER expression is distant but not unhappy.

INT. NIGHT LOUNGE

MARVIN continues his camera-work, though is now working from a chair. CONNIE sits perched in ROY's lap. THEY feed morsals of FRIED CHICKEN to one another, WILLY and STAN lean upon the bar. WILLY's eyes are heavy.

WILLY

I dunno' why I'm tellin' you this...

Don' even know if I can trust you...

STAN

If this helps --I'm not very ambitious.

WILLY

She's (*Connie*) ambitious. I trust her...

An' you know why? --Ambition, once defined can be (*makes fist*) controlled.

--I know what she wants... and can help

her get it...

STAN

(*low voice*)

What does she want?

WILLY

(*smiles*)

Roy laughs.

She wants... needs access to power.

I know that.

What about you?

STAN

Understand things ... truth, maybe?

WILLY LAUGHS. softly.

WILLY

You keep saying that.

(shakes his head)

That's a tough one.

--Look, should religion express man's
true internal creed? His seven day a week
feeling; not just his Sunday-morning
submissiveness, hmm? --Now. what would that be?
'Me first, asshole, get out of my way' Get my point?

STAN

The truth has to be shaped.

--History bears witness to its shaping,
A hundred million people were shot,
gassed, tortured starved, stabbed,
strangled, bombed and obliterated this century...

WILLY

I share that concern. I do.

STAN

I'm not much good at philosophy.. especially after
drinking; shaping these things is like mythology...
It's like shaping intolerance, like fashioning knives...
ALMA enters with a plate of steaming LOBSTER TAILS.

ROY

Bring 'at here, woman.

ALMA serves ROY who feeds CONNIE. STAN and WILLY gravitate to this feast.
WILLY sensing a need for sobriety puts the TELEVISION ON.

WILLY

Catch some news.

CONNIE, seemingly fascinated with the silent LOGO of a television show, comes
forward to watch, WILLY turns to STAN.

WILLY

You've got the greater and more
dangerous ambition, my friend.

STAN makes no reply.

CONNIE

Ooo, turn it up, Turn up the volume.

ROY

Aw ... it's only bullshit.

ALMA offers her tray to MARVIN who first videos it before partaking. The others are gathered into the glow of Television LIGHT.

INSERT (On TV):

EXT. DAY A pest-camera PERSON (P.O.V.) follows ROY and his AIDES. ROY turns into the CAMERA and issues commanding declarations.

RETURN:

INT. NIGHT LOUNGE

The group in the LOUNGE, LAUGHS.

ROY

God, they can annoy the hell out of you.

CONNIE

But, hon, you looked so mean, there.

ROY

Everywhere I go I got people standing on my
ears and cameras shoved in my face.

CONNIE turns up the AUDIO just in time for a COMMERCIAL.

INSERT: A MARVIN-look-alike wearing a military instructor's HAT barks out orders and a string of BLEEPED expletives.

ANNOUNCER (V. O.)

Let Sergeant Sadist train your whole entire family.

Toughen up with drill and physical training.

A FAMILY at their television execute several 'LEF' FACE!' half-turns while maintaining the position of ATTENTION.

ANNOUNCER (V.O.)

Only 11.95 from Venture Video...

In the LOUNGE, ROY turns the AUDIO off as the NEWS show Continues with several scenes: **INSERT: WILLY'S HOUSE, FILE FOOTAGE** of WILLY preaching. WILLY and ROY smiling in friendship. ROY turns it OFF.

ROY

I get sick of watchin' myself.

CONNIE

I don't. But I'm on another channel.

ROY dips his LOBSTER tail into a container of butter sauce, bites it and shares the remainder with CONNIE. He offers his buttery fingers for her to lick off, which she does. Then he rubs her body and they kiss. WILLY glances away.

ROY leads CONNIE to the guest room occupied by the ACTOR .

INT. NIGHT GUEST ROOM

Giggling, CONNIE and ROY brush against the bed but fall to the floor in an embrace. WILLY comes after them, he pulls at ROY's shirt-tails.

WILLY

(softly)

Not here. Roy... Please...

ROY looks behind him.

ROY

Dad? Dad, is that you?

ROY lets go of CONNIE and begins to rise in the near dark..

ROY

Oh my gosh, Dad, I'm sorry...

She made me do it.

WILLY

It's me, Roy, It's Will.

ROY giggles.

ROY

Will? Clairbolt?

WILLY

It's me. That a ... Jose's sleeping in here.

CONNIE with a cool expression watches from the floor as WILLY leads ROY back into the LOUNGE. CONNIE stands, stretches and glances back to the bed. The ACTOR lays awake.

CONNIE

Sorry to wake you, bub.

The ACTOR nods. CONNIE sashays to the doorway where she stands in silhouette for a long, luxurious moment.

INT. NIGHT LOUNGE

ROY portraying confusion and some embarrassment stays close to Willy. He covers his eyes with his hands and sobs briefly. WILLY tries to shield him from the others.

WILLY

It's okay, Roy.

ROY

For a minute... --She was no good!

ROY wipes tears from his face.

WILLY

You've been absolved. You've repented.

You have been forgiven.

ROY

How come it don't go away?

How come I still feel I got a
punishment coming?

WILLY

(intensely)

Do I have the power?

ROY

Yes, by-God, you do.

WILLY

Didn't I make you, and you make me?

ROY

Yes.

WILLY

Then believe.

ROY

(lighter mood)

I do. My God, give us the word!

Reverend Willy! YEEHA!

The greatest preachin' fellow this
boy ever knowed!

WILLY

Attaboy!

If you burn, Roy Goodboy, do you
know what it'll be for?

ROY

What?

WILLY

For wantin' everything your two big hands
can hold, an' me for fillin' tem up in the first
place. I am your FATHER, because I'm you
and you're ME. WE are the two hands of

ALLmighty GOD on this earth. We got the
vision and we...

ROY

Got the balls to make it happen!

WILLY

Say amen.

ROY

Amen.

WILLY

Roy, I trust you like no other...

ROY

I love you Clairbolt Willy. You gave me the means
to make it happen. --You brung God into my life.

WILLY and ROY hug with delirious ecstasy.

ROY

We can do no wrong!

WILLY releases ROY with a solid pat on his back.

ROY

What's happened to this party? Yeeha!

Let's get it going again, everybody drink up.

WILLY's phone RINGS. He answers it.

WILLY

(on phone)

It's how long till taping time?

(checks his watch)

Wasn't it canceled?...

--We can just send them home... All right...

WILLY hangs the phone up.

WILLY

I got some preachin' to do.

ROY

Not tonight, pard. It would be a mistake.

WILLY

I've delivered the goods in worse shape.

ROY LAUGHS.

ROY

(loudly)

We want a sermon. We want a sermon.

WILLY

(obliging)

Friends...

Have I got the voice right? Friends... we are
gathered here at a fork in the road, the left
runs to... I better write one...

ROY

Is this the great one? The sermon that
will make the difference? The best dang...

WILLY

It might be...

(laughs)

It might be the one that wakes...

The ACTOR appears in the LOUNGE. The 'color' leaves WILLY's face. WILLY becomes dizzy.

ROY

What's the matter there, hombre?

ROY and STAN support him. WILLY won't take his eyes off the Actor.

WILLY

I saw somethin'...

ROY

(looks back)

Only Jose.

ROY and STAN help WILLY into a chair. ROY seems woozy also and puts a hand upon the chair to steady himself.

ROY

Not doin' too good myself.

ROY sits down next to WILLY.

ACTOR

I was known as a 'Navi' a prophet.

Though to others I was Rabbi Yeshu ha
mashe-ach; Rabbi Joshi the anointed one...

WILLY

STOP IT!

STAN

What's the matter?

STAN looks at CONNIE for information. CONNIE is equally mystified.

ACTOR

--Quite a subversive title in those days.

WILLY

NO MORE, PLEASE!

STAN

(laughs)

Is this for real ... He's (the actor) only
doing his shtick!

ACTOR

In Galilee and Judea so long ago...

WILLY

No more!

STAN

(to actor)

Why, you must be Jesus Christ.

JESUS (Actor)

I suppose I am... sorry if I don't
appear as you would expect.

WILLY

It's the Holy Spirit...I can feel it.

It came into this room. Roy don't you feel it?

ROY

Light-headed...Yes I felt it.

WILLY

And?

ROY

(exhales)

And it must mean that this Jewish
fella here is all we got to show for
after centuries of praying to our Savior.

(pause)

Hell, Will, it musta been them lobster tails
mixed with scotch and gin, and what all we
been drinking.

It's what we ate, I tell ya...

WILLY

Roy, this was the first time I've
ever been visited by the Holy Spirit...

ROY

Well, now that IT knows where you are,
I'm sure you'll be receivin' it more often...

STAN

Put a little cold water on your face.

CONNIE

Go on.

WILLY rises. He heads for the Guest Room.

WILLY

I have never experienced that.

ROY

(calling after him)

You're out of practice. Ain't been
keepin' up with me in a while.

INT. NIGHT GUEST ROOM LAVATORY

WILLY watches himself in the MIRROR over the sink, HE turns the WATER ON.
Suddenly he ducks his head to avoid a FLOCK of WHITE DOVES he sees above him.
They disappear but WILLY spies a DROPPING on his shoulder. He takes some toilet
tissue to wipe it off, but the dropping too vanishes.

WILLY shuts his eyes tightly.

WILLY

Lord...Lord...

--I can't pray...

WILLY rushes into the LOUNGE. JESUS stands by the doorway.

JESUS

(to Willy, quietly)

Why do you call me Lord, Lord and do
not do the things I say?

WILLY moves away from Jesus, HE tries smiling.

WILLY

Friends...

EVERYONE looks to WILLY, even MARVIN who has allowed his camera to droop.

WILLY

Friends, do you realize
the importance
of this occasion?

ALL seem puzzled.

WILLY

We have Je-sus here with us!

ROY

(taking it as a joke)

All right! YEEHA!

(puts fist into air)

Welcome back!

(to Connie)

You and me still got some
business to attend to.

WILLY surveys the room, STAN speaks casually with JESUS as he waves a long-nursed drink about in gesture. JESUS nods, MARVIN, looking quite bored picks apart a LOBSTER TAIL. ROY holds CONNIE's hands as he 'sweet-talks' her. WILLY wipes his brow with a handkerchief.

WILLY

I got some things to do...

WILLY pauses before STAN and JESUS.

WILLY

Could you folks --all of ya -join me in
the studio, in a little while?

STAN

Sure.

Hurriedly, WILLY leaves the Lounge.

INT. NIGHT HALLWAY

WILLY's pace picks up dramatically. HIS face changes expression from panic to enthusiasm. He begins to mutter to himself, A PRODUCTION ASSOCIATE wearing a headset approaches him outside the studio.

PROD AS.

Will you be ready?

WILLY

Ready? Shit. Put together a satellite
feed... a network link-up... A multi-channel
hookup...

PROD AS.

Are you serious? Is the President going on?

WILLY

Rent the Astrodome for Easter Sunday.

WILLY enters his STUDIO OFFICE.

INT. NIGHT STUDIO OFFICE

WILLY takes a drink from the water cooler.

WILLY

(to himself, gleefully)

My God. --We'll have a SUPERBOWL for
Christ with a FIFTY MILLION GROSS!

(he giggles)

Designer clothes: Jesus-Holy-Duds.

How much a copy?

A new Church ... Crystal Palace will

look like a shack compared.

--The New Temple; The New Jerusalem!

Hallelujah.

WILLY slaps his hands together in excitement.

WILLY

Yes sir, folks, Jesus is back.

The Kingdom is here!

(pauses)

What kingdom? --My kingdom?

(shakes his head)

WILLY stands upright and sucks several deep breaths into his chest.

WILLY

This is the big one.

WILLY plays a tape recorder on his desks He picks up a small microphone and pins it to his lapel.

WILLY

Friends, our centuries of prayer ("*pray-air*") have

finally been answered.

Yes, answered. Why? Because our

Lord Jesus, our Teacher, our shepherd has

returned. Yes, Jesus Christ is here with me,

his very evening. IN THE FLESH!

WILLY pauses. He turns the tape recorder off and takes the microphone off.

WILLY

Words is failing me... HE IS HERE!

WILLY convulses with a fit of LAUGHTER.

WILLY

(laughing)

He's in my pocket...

(funny voice)

Here he is

(attempts control)

I'm talkin' to ya about Jesus!

WILLY's efforts dissolve into laughter.

WILLY

That Jewish-guy back there in the coarse tunic

is your long-awaited savior,

--No...Right here on CAMERA TWO

--Get a CLOSE UP...

How would Jesus look on Television?

HE needs make-up ... A white robe...

Off-white ... Think HE'll get upset...?

Just a few suggestions. I know...

That's why he come to me.

--JESUS IS BACK!

WILLY drums a beat on his desk.

WILLY

Savior's back...

Course, he never left, did he?

WILLY paces.

WILLY

You there, in the front row...
You immoral God-groupie, with your
legs spread to both coasts
--wearin' no underpants... Damn you
for tempting me --Always tempting me...
I'm a preachin' man.... A preachin' man...
--Maybe I don't always measure up. I look
the other way ... I got too much AMBITION!
--I'm sorry if I didn't always believe in you.
You could have sent a sign before now...I thought
I was doin' well anyway...Had your favor...

WILLY sits

WILLY

I can't do this tonight... I just can't.
My mind isn't working. Is that it?
Will you put the right words into
my mouth, Lord? --What am I talking about?
I need some sleep. I'm going nuts.
--I got to do it tonight. I just have to.

The INTERCOM BUZZES. WILLY ANSWERS IT.

WILLY

Yeah?

PROD AS. (INTERCOM V.O.)

When do you want the networks?
And Reverend, did you mention
something about the Astro-Dome?

WILLY

(dejectedly)

Just standby on all that...

INT. NIGHT LOUNGE

CONNIE and ROY sit on the couch and search each other's eyes. HE touches her face. SHE watches him with interest.

Casually, STAN escorts JESUS toward the hallway. THEY are having a conversation UNHEARD from this vantage point.

MARVIN begins to slump in his chair. The mood in the lounge is quiet and unhurried.

CONNIE touches ROY's hand.

CONNIE

Guest room?

ROY grins.

ROY

I love the way you think, girl.

HE kisses her hand. SHE smiles.

ROY

But I got a better idea. A --wilder-idea.

One that you would just love.

CONNIE

What's that?

ROY

(taking his time)

When I was a fellah on a Texas night

in the springtime...

Goin' out for a nowhere drive...

(winks)

Best girl on my arm. Big car.

Cruisin'... Nothin' but sky above.

(nuzzles her)

The BIG sky above...

CONNIE SIGHS.

ROY

Warmth floatin' up from that
hu-mongis engine. The ol' gas guzzler...

Mixin' with the chill of evenin'
--A night that seems like it could
go for ever, if you don't stop it.

CONNIE

My lover is a poet... --Let's do it.

ROY

Get a car you mean.?

SHE kisses his fingers.

CONNIE

Get a car.

ROY

(laughs softly)

With three security men bouncin'
around on the trunk?

CONNIE

Couldn't we fix it for just this
special night?

ROY pulls her close.

ROY

Maybe we could try.

INT. NIGHT STUDIO OFFICE

STAN enters. WILLY looks up at him.

WILLY

Where's Jesus?

STAN

Down the hall...getting a drink or something.

WILLY

He's got to go on- TV tonight.

--Hope he does well.

Can the... can the Holy Spirit

be felt over television?

STAN

Is this a four-part answer?

WILLY

I'm serious.

I'm concerned about

him doing well on TV.

STAN

What do you want him to do, talk about love?

WILLY

(annoyed)

No.

There's more to bein' a Christian

than yappin' about LOVE.

STAN

Like what?

WILLY

(sharply)

If you'd shut up a minute I'll tell ya'

--There's doctrine. There's an
absolute declared belief.

STAN

Where does tolerance fit in?

WILLY hammers his desk-tops

WILLY

EVERY IOTA OF THE
CHRIST DOCTRINE
MUST BE ENFORCED...

STAN

What...

WILLY

--OR THERE WILL BE NO ORDER!

STAN

WHAT--...What are we arguing about?

WILLY

Your truth.

STAN

This reminds me of my failed marriage
arguments based on supposition.

WILLY

Oh, so you've only committed the sin
of divorce, and not sodomy as I would
have guessed; or that too?

STAN

You're the representative of God?

WILLY

(cooly)

Forgive me my manners.

STAN

Your manners?

(shakes his head)

WILLY

But I resent representing the greatest--

(rising)

RELIGION THAT SUB-SUMED HEATHEN

PRACTICE!

I don't know SUB-SUMED! --But I do know

CON-SUMED! And some will be CONSUMED

in eternal HELL-FIRES for their blaspheme.

STAN

(low voice but quaking w/anger)

The other hand of your All-mighty God is boffing a
high-priced bimbo under your roof and full of your booze;

don't give me any shit about hell-fires.

WILLY relents.

WILLY

--Cast not the first stone...

All right..

(exhales)

We all compromise.

--It's been a hard night on me,

boy. Give me a break.

WILLY sits on the edge of his desk and grins.

WILLY

(boyishly)

Forgive your brother?

STAN

My God. you're a trying character.

--What's this about television; you
have a skit or a...a dramatization?

WILLY

I'm gonna put Jesus on,

(shakes his head affirmatively)

Put our Lord on TV.

STAN searches WILLY's face for hint of a joke, but finds none.

STAN

This is serious, right?

WILLY

Oh yeah. But...

--But, I'm concerned it might not
be HIS medium. A grave concern.

STAN LAUGHS.

STAN

I'm missing something...

WILLY

You've known all along...

STAN

Maybe I should just let you go
ahead and make a fool of yourself.

It might even be in MY best interest;
but I must caution you...

WILLY

What I figured, HE's unfamiliar with the
medium ... too involved with the message,
not telegenic enough. Oh boy...

WILLY looks up at STAN with uncertainty.

WILLY

Just what am I gonna do?

INT. NIGHT KITCHEN

JESUS enters the Kitchen, ALMA looks up.

JESUS

Such an interesting variety of aromas.

ALMA

You hungry? Just get on in here;
see if we can't fix that.

JESUS looks at the large array of foodstuffs.

JESUS

(re: lobsters)

What manner of creature is this?

ALMA

Lobster.

JESUS

(re: fried chicken)

And this?

ALMA

That's only the best fried chicken you'll

ever eat in this life,

JESUS

Is that so? Chicken?

ALMA

Let me heat some of it up in the microwave.

JESUS

Microwave... an engine, ah.

ALMA places several pieces in the microwave-and selects a setting.

ALMA

Have a seat, Be ready in a jiff.

JESUS

I will. I must be famished.

ALMA

(winks)

We'll cure that.

INT. NIGHT LOUNGE

CONNIE stands and puts her hand out for ROY to follow.

CONNIE

Call down and get one of the motorcade
security cars for me to use.

ROY

And?

CONNIE

Tell them I have to get to the airport.

ROY

(chuckling)

Carry me out in a duffle bag?

CONNIE smiles as she moves closer to ROY and places her arms around his neck.

INT. NIGHT SERVICE ENTRANCE

A SECURITY COMMAND POST has been set up and bristles into ACTION with the receipt of a PHONE CALL.

SECURITY AIDE 3

(to others)

Get Car-2 Ready!

AIDES scramble to and fro barking cryptic code WORDS into their radios.

SECURITY AIDE 5

Shall we secure for BOSSMAN?

SECURITY AIDE 3

Negative, Negative...Bossman AKA Lonestar
will remain in perimeter; do not stand down.

SECURITY AIDE 5

(into radio)

Negative, Negative; Bossman resides,
repeat, Bossman resides, OVER.

SEC. AIDE 4 (V.O.)

(RADIO SQUAWK)

Code to me what party, OVER.

SECURITY AIDE 3

Tell him 'Sweet-Dumper'

SECURITY AIDE 5

(into radio)

Sweet-Dumper

SEC. AIDE 4 (V.O.)

(RADIO SQUAWK)

Sweet-Dumper? Hmmm Mighty-fine.

Angrily, SECURITY AIDE 3 takes AIDE 5's RADIO and barks into it.

SECURITY AIDE 3

(into radio)

Knock off that BRAVO-SIERRA, look alive out there.

Threat level low. This is a routine. OVER and OUT.

(smirks to others)

That ought to give him a goose.

SECURITY AIDE 5

Why she taking the car?

SECURITY AIDE 3

She lost her panty-hose; I don't know.

INT. NIGHT LOUNGE

ROY puts on MARVIN's BLOUSY FATIGUE SHIRT with its voluminous pockets stuffed with cassettes and small cables. MARVIN attempts to knot ROY's NECKTIE properly, over ROY's SHIRT which he is now wearing but gives up leaving the tie in an awkward square-KNOT.

CONNIE

(giddy)

This is gonna' be fun.

ROY attempts to lift the CAMCORDER by its handle, but MARVIN grasps it and won't let go. ROY gives it a tug but MARVIN won't relent. ROY glowers.

CONNIE

He's attached to that camera.

ROY

I've noticed.

(to Marvin)

Look boy, you're gonna be
chief-of-state in my stead.

--I won't hurt the camera --I swear to ya...

CONNIE

It's for me, Marv.

Reluctantly Marvin releases the camera. Roy hefts it to his shoulder. From the CAMERA-SIDE its impossible to tell who is holding it.

ROY

For once a camera will give me some
privacy, if this works.

CONNIE stands close to ROY as they prepare to exit.

CONNIE

(to Marvin)

Remember sweetie, you got to stay
in here till we get back,

ROY

(to Connie; of Marvin)

Don't HE talk?

CONNIE

Sure. (shrugs)

ROY and CONNIE exit. MARVIN sits down presidentially.

INT. NIGHT HALLWAY

ROY and CONNIE pass the SECURITY AIDE(#2). ROY is not detected. CONNIE turns to the Agent after they pass.

CONNIE

The President does not wish to be
disturbed.

The AIDE does not recognize ROY from BEHIND. HE nods affirmatively to Connie.

CONNIE and ROY continue down the hallway. ROY smirks over the success of the ruse so far.

EXT. NIGHT SERVICE ENTRANCE

SECURITY AIDE 5 holds the door to a BLACK AUTOMOBILE for CONNIE. ROY, his face hidden by the Camera on his shoulder gets in. ALL the MEN'S EYES are busy taking in CONNIE. INTERCUT MEN'S SMILING FACES and CONNIE's FORM in SLOW MOTION.

CONNIE

(to Aide)

I'll drive.

SEC. AIDE 5

Are you sure, Ma'am?

CONNIE

Yes.

The AIDE presents her with the keys.

SEC. AIDE 5

Drive safely.

CONNIE

I will.

From INSIDE CAR, REAR SEAT, ROY watches CONNIE get behind the wheel. SHE grins at him briefly and starts the ENGINE.

The CAR begins to move down the DRIVEWAY.

ROY

I can't believe we're gonna' get away with this.

CONNIE

Keep back.

SECURITY AIDE 4 watches the CAR drive past. HE raises the radio to his mouth.

SEC AIDE 4

(to radio)

Sweet Dumper clear grounds;

Advise ETR, OVER...

From INSIDE the CAR,ROY watches them depart WILLY's ESTATE.

ROY

YAHOO! We did it, darlin'

We did it!

ROY sets the camera in the well and climbs over the seat to sit in the passenger's seat next to CONNIE.

ROY

I haven't been out of that cage
in years!

WAHOOO!

CONNIE

Where to?

ROY

There's a picnic spot overlooking
a bluff not far down this road...

CONNIE gives ROY a look that thrills him.

CONNIE

After tonight, you may never be
the same.

ROY

(happily)

Could be.

INT. NIGHT KITCHEN

JESUS finishes eating and wipes his hands on a napkin.

JESUS

Very tasty.

ALMA

Is that all you're going to eat?

JESUS

I'm quite satisfied, really.

ALMA

You eat like a bird.

There are some men here who could devour
TEN pieces the size you just ate... and still
want mores --They always want more.

JESUS

What mighty men they must be.
Or greedy.

WILLY enters.

WILLY

There you are. --Hi Alma.

ALMA

Good evening, Reverend.
The fixings all up to snuff?

WILLY

As usual.

Alma, everything was truly excellent.

(sees chicken)

Uhooo

I might have me a piece right now.

WILLY bites into a piece of CHICKEN.

ALMA

Heated 'em up for your actor friend,
but he don't eat much.

WILLY removes the chicken from his mouth.

WILLY

I don't want to be eatin' my Lord's
dinner.

JESUS

I was finished.

ALMA

He doesn't have the robust appetite
as some of the men around here do...

--That desire for life...

ALMA picks up a tray of coffee and sandwiches.

ALMA

Got to try to feed those troops.

Those hungry centurions.

ALMA leaves with the tray.

WILLY

Wanted to talk to you about
what you said to me on my
way out of the washroom
a while ago.

JESUS

Yes.

WILLY

We will be making a break with...
with a, you know, Judaism...won't we?
--See, I always figured the Catholics
were on the wrong track. but uh... Judaism..
See my point?

JESUS

No.

WILLY

Well they crucified you!

JESUS

Gentiles did the crucifying,
and the crusading and the exterminating.

Should I hate all Gentiles?

WILLY

No.

But WE listen to you.

JESUS

How so do you listen? By murdering
millions of my Sister's children?

WILLY

We WORSHIP you. Doesn't that count?

JESUS

I won't say.

To arrive back at your original point.

Hardly anyone, Jewish or Gentile really

LISTENED and understood.

All the prophets are betrayed.

WILLY

At least you're not mad
about it, that's more than

I can say for myself.

Why can't you HELP us?

--If we're, weak make us strong.

Come down from Heaven with
the vanguard of Angels, the shouts
of trumpets... The Power and Glory
shining down. That would make
it a whole lot easier on us down here.

JESUS

You want miracles but all you get
is flesh.

JESUS pinches his arm to demonstrate.

JESUS

People must complete the
act of creation by trying to
REDEEM themselves,
--It can not be done for you.

WILLY stands.

WILLY

Jesus-God; this flies in
the face of everything I've believed

JESUS

I'm sorry.

WILLY

I guess this means you won't
be going on television?

JESUS

(muses)

Tele-vision... You micro-wave your food;
and television your ideas.

--But on the inside...

(opens a piece of chicken)

It is sometimes half-baked.

WILLY leaves.

INT. NIGHT HALLWAY

WILLY lumbers down a corridor with FRIED CHICKEN in his hands. STAN encounters him.

STAN

Reverend... Clairbolt, what's the matter?

You looked stupefied...

STAN and WILLY walk together several paces.

WILLY

(mumbling)

If he's not God incarnate maybe

we can shoot him.

WILLY opens the door to his STUDIO OFFICE

STAN

Who?

WILLY

Who do you think? --Jesus.

STAN

(concerned)

I think you should see a doctor about

this. Real soon...

WILLY

I need a moment alone.

STAN

Sure.

You going to recover?

WILLY

I don't know.

WILLY enters his OFFICE.

EXT. NIGHT HIGHWAY

The BLACK AUTOMOBILE cruises quickly down the ROAD. It's TIRES SPLASH through a roadside PUDDLE.

INSIDE the CAR: CONNIE drives fast. The SPEEDOMETER NEEDLE edges 100 M.P.H. SHE throws back her head and LAUGHS wantonly. ROY'S EYES are intoxicated with desire for her.

HER DRESS has risen high up. Her RIGHT LEG holds down the ACCELERATOR.

CONNIE

I've got the power, Roy.

ROY

Right up there...

ROY points.

The TIRES SQUEAL harshly as CONNIE tries to slow down and swerves OFF the road. The CAR seems to go OUT OF CONTROL. CONNIE's and ROY's FACES are FROZEN with a joyous serenity. TREES come up FAST and the CAR STOPS.

ROY

Boy, can you drive.

CONNIE laughs.

ROY's hand glides up her THIGH. SHE sinks down in the plush front seat. THEY KISS. SHE hikes her DRESS up to her HIPS. ROY unbuckles his BELT.

CONNIE

Give it to me.

ROY

I was born under a lucky star.

The CAR begins to ROCK as it sits alone in the night fields.

EXT. NIGHT ROADSIDE

The VAN of ROWDIES slows to a halt on the wrong side of the road. A SIGN READS: 'PICNIC AREA AHEAD, POPLAR BLUFFS PARK'. The KNIFE-FACED ROWDY looks out the window.

KNIFE-FACE

Maybe we can do some campers, or
something.

HE opens his SWITCHBLADE KNIFE.

KNIFE-FACE

Have some fun.

The OTHERS LAUGH.

EXT. NIGHT FIELD

The CAR's ROCKING reaches a violent crescendo and then ceases.

INSIDE the CAR, CONNIE's and ROY's ardor deflate. SHE begins to LAUGH.

ROY

(grinning)

What's so funny?

Still laughing CONNIE wriggles over the seat-back into the REAR seat. ROY follows.

CONNIE

Watch the camera.

ROY

Ooops. Can't have numb-nuts mad at me.

CONNIE feels an object on the floor and picks it up. It's a POLICEMAN's CAP.

CONNIE

What's this doing here?

She perches the CAP on ROY's head.

ROY

I was given this at a dinner the
other night on the behalf of LAW

ENFORCEMENT ...

You know I'm a law and order man.

CONNIE

I'll say.

(laughing)

Pretty quick on the draw too.

ROY

(chuckling)

Wait a minute...

ROY grabs her.

ROY

I thought we had it pretty well timed.

SHE puts her arms around him.

CONNIE

I coulda used a little more time...

ROY

How much more?

CONNIE

A half-hour at least.

They both LAUGH.

ROY

I ain't doin' no marathons in
the middle of the night.

CONNIE

Why not, still up to bronc-bustin?

ROY

Oh I like you.

THEY KISS passionately. The Camera is still on. The EYEPIECE reflects a low light scene. **INSERT:** Brief video, poorly framed, of ROY and CONNIE in a 'compromised position.'

INT. NIGHT AUDITORIUM

The LIGHTS are UP as a team of CUSTODIAL STAFF sweep and mop between the seat rows. An ELDERLY CUSTODIAN groans as he reaches down to pick up a PLEDGE CARD.

CUSTODIAN 1

Some folks think everywhere's their trash cans.

JESUS enters the AUDITORIUM. HE watches with concern as the OLDER MAN strains to stand.

CUSTODIAN 1

(to Jesus)

Don't you worry, I'll limber up.

JESUS

You should take ease ...

The OLDER MAN TITTERS.

CUSTODIAN 1

Ease don't pay the rent.

JESUS

No...

Not much is different in this world...

The empires wage colonial wars
in distant lands. People are murdered
for a coin or an insult.

The crowd wants carnivals.

The homeless speak their madness on the streets
and huddle in abandoned things to sleep...

CUSTODIAN 1

Why do you suppose that is?

JESUS

If you take a table that is slightly crooked
in one leg so that it wobbles a little; yet it
is usable, but upon it you place another
table that is also slightly crooked and so
on, till you have builded a tower of tables,
then I say to you --the crookedness at the
top is much magnified from its imperfections
in the FOUNDATION.

ALL the CUSTODIANS pause in their duties to LISTEN. STAN enters the
AUDITORIUM.

JESUS

A certain Businessman went into a
far country to receive a corporation
and to return...

CUT TO

INT. NIGHT STUDIO OFFICE WILLY LISTENS ON HIS INTERCOM,

JESUS (V.O.)

(through intercom)

--You collect what you did NOT
deposit, and REAP what you did
NOT sow...

CUT TO

INT. NIGHT AUDITORIUM

JESUS continues with his story.

JESUS

To everyone who has, MORE will be given;

and from him who does not have, even that will
be TAKEN...

ALL seem confused.

CUSTODIAN 1

Why?

JESUS

Can the most crooked table at the very
top support this bounty when beneath it,
is nought?

(adamantly)

The tables shall fall; come crashing
down as Babel...

ALL APPLAUD, STANLEY nods in admiration.

CUSTODIAN 1

That was some powerful preaching.

JESUS

I shall leave you before
your master comes to reproach you...

CUT TO

INT. NIGHT STUDIO OFFICE.

WILLY maintains an unpleasant, dull expression fixated upon a distant point. HE switches the INTERCOM OFF and leans back upon his chair. SLOWLY, without attention, he brings a piece of FRIED CHICKEN forward and bites into it.

EXT. NIGHT FIELD

INSIDE the CAR, ROY collapses onto CONNIE.

ROY

How was that? Measure up?

CONNIE

Okay.

ROY climbs into the FRONT SEAT, CONNIE follows.

ROY

Just okay?

CONNIE again perches the POLICE CAP on ROY's Head.

CONNIE

That was wonderful, OFFICER.

P.O.V. Someone approaches the CAR, its WINDOWS too STEAMY on the INSIDE to be aware of this party. It's the KNIFE-FACED ROWDIE. HE rounds the CAR on the DRIVER's SIDE and can see ROY wearing the POLICE HAT. This seems to give him a weird thrill.

INSIDE the CAR, THEY are at ease.

CONNIE

(coyly)

What happened years ago with your sister?

ROY starts the CAR's ENGINE.

ROY

Little Eva?

ROY GUNS the ACCELERATOR harshly, LURCHING the CAR into a POWER REVERSE.

QUANTITIES of DIRT CLOUDS SPEW OUT from under the TIRES. The KNIFE-FACE ROWDIE must JUMP out of the WAY. The CAR SPINS backwards onto the HIGHWAY in front of the PARKED VAN.

ROY puts the CAR into DRIVE and PUMPS the GAS PEDAL.

THE CAR SCREAMS FORWARD down the HIGHWAY slashing once again through the large, roadside PUDDLE.

ROY

Nothin' to say on that score, babe.

CONNIE

You don't trust me..

The SPEEDOMETER tops 110 M.P.H.

ROY

Now, I've got the POWER!

WHOOOEEEE!

ROY puts an arm around CONNIE.

ROY

Sit close to me, babe.

EXT. NIGHT HIGHWAY

From the vantage point of the still CHURNING ROAD PUDDLE, the KNIFE-FACED ROWDIE watches the RED TAIL-LIGHTS zoom out of SIGHT.

KNIFE-FACE

Stinkin' Cops; can drive as fast

as they want...

The (puddle) WATERS CHURN.

INT. NIGHT STUDIO OFFICE

In a small private LAVATORY off the OFFICE, WILLY slowly washes his HANDS with great deliberations. He begins to WHISTLE an old TUNE.

THERE is only ONE LIGHT ON over his desk. A sense of foreboding hangs in the calm emptiness

INT. NIGHT SERVICE ENTRANCE

CONNIE and ROY enter. The SECURITY AIDES are surprised.

ROY

Howdy boys. This was a test.

(smiles)

and you flunked, but that's all right.

ROY hands the VIDEOCAMERA to SECURITY AIDE 5.

ROY

Make sure the President gets this.

CONNIE watches in amusement as the AIDES scurry about barking new COMMANDS into their RADIOS.

INT. NIGHT HALLWAY

SECURITY AIDE 5 hurries down the corridor with Marvin's camcorder. SECURITY AIDE 2 stands by the door. POCKET RADIOS SQUAWK messages about 'LONESTAR BOSSMAN'.

SEC AIDE 2

President doesn't want to be disturbed.

SEC. AIDE 5 OPENS the door to the RECREATION LOUNGE anyway. MARVIN is revealed sitting in a chair grinning. He still wears the NECKTIE with a ludicrous KNOT.

The SECURITY MEN look at one another.

INT. NIGHT STUDIO OFFICE

ROY enters sporting a huge grin. HE removes his COP HAT and tosses it onto WILLY's desk.

ROY

Hey...Let's arrest everybody

--What's the matter there, pard,
you don't look so good.

ROY picks up a piece of FRIED CHICKEN from WILLY's desk and EATS IT.

WILLY

Roy, we got the wrong Jesus.

ROY

(laughing)

What do you mean Will?

WILLY

Somehow there was a mix-up. --Maybe we
got the Jewish Messiah instead of the Christian Savior...

ROY

Talk plain to me ... I'm beginning

to worry about you.

WILLY

That fellah...

ROY

The actor, you mean?

WILLY

Yeah. He AIN'T the Jesus Christ

I've been expecting.

ROY

Of course not.

WILLY

He don't even LOOK like the Jesus

Christ I've been expecting.

ROY

Because he isn't.

WILLY

But how will people KNOW THAT?

ROY

Jesus will always be safe in our kid's
imagination and on our Easter Cards.

WILLY is agitated.

WILLY

That person is a threat to our National Security.

A threat to our way of life... A threat to our way
of doing business.

ROY

(growing concerned)

Oh?

WILLY

That's right.

(confidentially)

He wants you to DO things that
could threaten propriety.

--And people-will listen to him.

People will believe him, because
I believe him. This is most serious.

ROY

Then we will look into it.

ROY extends his hand in friend-ship. WILLY accepts but as they release their clasp he feels something GREASY on his fingers. ROY looks to his almost finished CHICKEN. They BOTH LAUGH.

Continuing with their shared mirth, the two old friends WASH their HANDS together in WILLY's small STUDIO OFFICE LAVATORY.

INT. NIGHT AUDITORIUM

STUDIO TECHNICIANS set up TELEVISION cameras, microphones. lights and lay cables about. STANLEY and JESUS stroll among them talking (M.O.S.). JESUS shakes hands with many of the CREW people.

INT. NIGHT LOUNGE

MARVIN, with his own clothes back on, loads a fresh battery into his camcorder. BEHIND HIM ROY tries to re-knot his NECKTIE properly. HE fusses with the wrinkles.

ROY

Damn, you've made a mess of this thing...

--Can't be in such an all-fired hurry.

CONNIE applies fresh lipstick using a compact-case mirror.

EXT. NIGHT ESTATE GROUNDS

The VAN full of ROWDIES attempts to pull into the DRIVE-WAY. SECURITY AIDE #4 waves them to a halt. In doing so his JACKET opens revealing an UZZI submachine

gun in a carrying holster.

SEC. AIDE 4

What're you doing here?

DRIVER

(obliging)

We got passes...

DRIVER fumbles with several pieces of paper.

SEC. AIDE 4

Passes to what?

Be quick 'cause in a minute they'll be fifteen
guys swarmin' up your ass bustin' caps.

DRIVER

WILLY MISSIONS message-show.

See...

SECURITY AIDE 4 takes the papers. SECURITY AIDES 3 and 5 come running over with assault weapons drawn.

SEC. AIDE 3

What's this vehicle doing here?

Who are these personnel?

AIDE 4 shares the paperwork with his fellows.

SEC.AIDE 4

Religious show...

DRIVER

Yeah, we want to get saved.

SEC. AIDE 3

(reading passes)

The Reverend's 'Darkness to Dawn' show.

(to Driver)

It's the next Driveway down...
There are uniformed security to
direct YOU.

DO NOT BE CAUGHT IN A
RESTRICTED AREA UPON
THESE GROUNDS!

DRIVER

Why? What's going on...

SEC. AIDE 3

WHY? Because I'll blow your shit away.

Now get this vehicle the hell outa here!

Now! MOVE!

DRIVER

Yes sir, We're going.

There are restrained GIGGLES behind the DRIVER as he quickly vacates this entrance-way. AIDES 3 and 5 trot back toward the HOUSE. Alone again, SECURITY AIDE 4 unleashes a huge grin. HE takes a piece of FRIED CHICKEN from his pocket and begins to EAT it.

INT. NIGHT AUDITORIUM

PEOPLE begin to file into the auditorium and take seats. THEY are an assorted mixture of peoples though generally serious and few are very young. The ROWDIES arrive together and are in stark contrast to the others. They are shown to their seats by a large USHER with no humor in his face.

SEATED, the group huddles their heads together. GIGGLES come to the surface.

DRIVER

This is the weirdest thing we've ever done.

KNIFE FACE

We'll get ourselves on television.

LAUGHTER.

The LARGE USHER returns to their aisle.

USHER

Absolutely no talking.

DRIVER

What'll we do while waitin' for the show?

USHER

Look around you. Pray.

OTHERS are meditating and saying silent prayers.

DRIVER

(under his breath)

What junk.

(to Usher)

That's what we come here for.

The USHER returns to his duties. The ROWDIES put their hands together in front of their faces. KNIFE FACE intones a violent rock-song epic. ALL TITTER and cover their grinning faces with their hands.

As the AUDITORIUM fills the HOUSE LIGHTS DIM. The ELDERLY CUSTODIAN stands by the door. HE bows his head and offers a heart-felt prayer.

INT. NIGHT HALLWAY

STANLEY meets WILLY outside the latter's Studio Office.

STAN

I'm beginning to see the wisdom
of using our friend on your show.

WILLY

You are, huh...

--Well, things can change.

And Stanley ... don't be worried

STAN

(confused)

About what?

WILLY

Well, there's something funny in the air shall we say.

But we've got excellent security here.

--The President maintains that certain areas
outside are practically a free-fire zone.

Imagine that.

I wouldn't want to be no extremist
or terrorist breakin' in here, would you?

Enjoy the show!

STAN watches WILLY pass. Something clicks in his mind.

STAN

(to himself)

I've got to find him!

STAN rushes down the corridor.

INT. NIGHT AUDITORIUM

The house LIGHTS are DARK. The PODIUM where WILLY stands is lit. ROY and CONNIE stand together in the WINGS illuminated by the glow of MONITORS. THEY are watched by SECURITY AIDES. MARVIN holds his camera as he watches. He stays in the shadows, out of the way.

WILLY has changed into a fresh BLUE SUIT. HIS mood is chipper.

WILLY

Hello friends.

Boy, it's been a strange night for me,

(chuckles pleasantly)

It's not everyday that you behold a mystery

and must decide what to do about it.

Even ask yourself 'Hey am I goin' crazy

or is God sharin' something
with me. Somethin' I should know...

(MORE)

STAN enters the AUDITORIUM from the MAIN ENTRANCE, HE APPROACHES the USHER

STAN

(whispering)

Did you see a fellow dressed...

The USHER waves him to silence and points at the proceedings. STAN searches visually for sign of Jesus.

WILLY (CONT' D)

I have been especially blessed.

Blessed in a personal fortuitousness

Blessed in friends, blessed by you in your trust

and very company.

But even into those blessings

--things can intrude...

Honestly, you let down your

guard for one minute and SATAN

can bust in on ya.

POW. Pick you up and shake

you up and drop you like an.

empty sack of garbage.

(MORE)

ROY leans close to CONNIE.

ROY

(whispers)

When he gets going, watch out.

WILLY (CONT'D)

Satan did that to me, yes he did,
--this very night. While you good folks
were drivin' up here tonight Satan
was battlin' with me.

(dramatically)

REACHIN' RIGHT INTO MY SOUL and
TWISTIN' MY SELF INTO THE STUFF

(MORE)

A MOAN flows through the AUDIENCE on this revelation.

WILLY (CONT'D)

--the stuff EVIL is made of.

Evil can be many things my friends.

Evil can be indecision.

Evil can be the failure to protect the things,
the way of life you so dearly love.

Protect the very things you are blessed in.

(MORE)

The CAMERA ZOOMS IN on MARVIN'S FACE. His eyes are WIDE.

CUT TO

INSERT:

EXT. NIGHT GROUNDS.

The CHILD-LIKE BEINGS are hurt. They reel in turmoil and anguish. Their arms wave for someone to help them. ONE falls to the EARTH. All is unsteady. Frightening.

BACK TO

INT. NIGHT AUDITORIUM

MARVIN is worried. HE takes his CAMERA and moves through the darkness toward an EXIT.

WILLY (CONT'D)

I shall fight to the end of me to preserve
and protect ALL that I cherish.

--And this includes the
DOCTRINE of my Lord!

(MORE)

CHORUS of 'AMENS' resounds.

WILLY (CONT'D)

EVERY IOTA OF IT!

Friends, the hour is late, for indeed
the new hour comes. Lateness
comes to newness. Death to Life.

We are going to do something unusual tonight...

(MORE)

WILLY sees JESUS next to a DOLLY-MOUNTED T.V. Camera.

WILLY (CONT'D)

Let us journey outdoors to witness
the coming of the new hour of our new life.

(he raises his hands)

The Ushers will lead you out... COME.

WILLY removes his throat-mic. JESUS ascends the podium. WILLY takes his arm.

WILLY

(to Jesus)

Come with me Rabbi.

STANLEY sees this and rushes to go forward but is held back by USHERS. His frustration grows as he attempts to break out. He turns and runs from the AUDITORIUM.

INT. NIGHT HALLWAY

STANLEY runs down the empty corridors. He finds the EXITS blocked by grinning

SECURITY MEN. HE turns repeatedly and takes corridor after corridor in an effort to get out. Unable, he quickly returns to the now empty AUDITORIUM.

INT. NIGHT AUDITORIUM

STANLEY rushes down the AISLE through the wings and out the EXIT door.

EXT. NIGHT ESTATE GROUNDS

CONNIE and ROY stand near the building. STANLEY is nearly out of breath.

STAN

Where is he?

ROY

Who?

SECURITY AIDE #2 intercedes.

SEC AIDE 2

Move along, please.

STAN

Where is he?

ROY

(laughing)

Who?

(to Connie)

Who's he talking about?

CONNIE shrugs.

STANLEY pushes through the CROWD. HE encounters the ROWDIES who purposely jostle him.

KNIFE FACE

Watch who you're bangin' into, asshole.

The OTHER ROWDIES LAUGH. THEY begin to shove STANLEY. STANLEY turns and meets with WILLY and JESUS.

WILLY

Stanley, I've been looking for you.

DRIVER

(to Willy)

Hey, Doc, who's this character?

(Indicates Jesus)

WILLY

Rabbi Joshi.

KNIFE FACE

A Jew!

TAUNTS and LAUGHTER.

WILLY releases JESUS.

STAN

What are you doing?

WILLY

Boys will be boys.

The ROWDIES taunt and SLAP JESUS knocking him to the ground. STANLEY attempts to intervene but is punched and pushed back.

STANLEY staggers and tries to find help.

WILLY

Hard to find a cop when you need one.

SUDDENLY a STRONG LIGHT comes UP. The pummeling JESUS is receiving can be seen by ALL. The LIGHT is a VIDEO LIGHT erected by MARVIN who moves forward with his Camera.

CUSTODIAN 1

What are they doing to that man?

Somebody stop them!

WILLY goes forward.

WILLY

(to Jesus)

Will you accept CHRIST?

BLOOD streams from Jesus' FACE. STANLEY tries to comfort JESUS.

JESUS

(to Stanley)

Remember what you will see...

KNIFE FACE removes his BELT and loops it around JESUS' neck.

THERE is much commotion. The VIDEO-LIGHT malfunctions and acts like a STROBE providing a surrealistic EFFECT to what transpires.

ROY

All right.

SECURITY AIDE 2

(shouting)

Secure intrusion breach!

The SECURITY PERSONNEL rush forward FIRING WEAPONS.

SEC AIDE 3

(shouting)

Clear the area! Clear the area!

SEC.AIDE 5 JUMPS on ROY knocking him to the ground where upon he covers ROY with his body.

ROY

Jesus Christmas!

--My God, don't make love to me.

SEC. AIDES 2, 3, 4 and OTHERS rush forward FIRING. JESUS is HIT. The PUNKS SCATTER. STANLEY rises from the ground apparently not shot.

STAN

My God, my God, my God...

What's going on here?

What is going on?

The VIDEO LIGHT comes on very bright then DIES. DARKNESS.

SEC. AIDE 3

Detain all intruders.

(w/frenetic emotion)

Body counts! Give me a body counts!

SEC. AIDE 5

There was one over there.

SEC. AIDE 3

Where? Where?

SEC. AIDE 5

I don't know. There was one here

a minute ago.

PEOPLE search for a BODY near their FEET. The GROUNDS LIGHTS COME UP HALF. The ELDERLY CUSTODIAN POINTS into the SKY.

CUSTODIAN 1

Is my eyes playin' tricks on me?

Is that a man's form goin' up?

OTHERS LOOK.

SECURITY AIDE 3

(w/frenetic emotion)

There are no bodies on these grounds!

ROY rises to his feet. He gently pats CONNIE's shoulder.

ROY

(matter-of-factly)

So. that was our gentle Savior, after all.

STANLEY shakes his head. He begins to understand.

STAN

(to an absent Jesus)

How could you do it ...
How could you give them
so much *undeserved* hope?

The GROUP begins to come together with WILLY as its center.

STAN

(to Willy)

How could you do this?
Murder him like that?

WILLY

Murder?

ROY

You see a body, boy?

WILLY

Could we do anything HE wouldn't
want us to?

STAN

(w/rage)

I saw it! I remember!

WILLY

So do I...HE said to us...

I am the Life and the Resurrection.

He who believes not-in-me has no Life...

STAN

He said to remember this outrage!

This murder, this crucifixion is
another sign that human arrogance

can destroy the world.

WILLY

(to ROY)

We are the witnesses to his Second Going.

ROY

And we won't forget a thing of it!

STAN

Thieves and liars...

The FIRST LIGHT of PRE-DAWN comes in the EAST.

WILLY

Ah, the EASTER SEASON...

The joy of spring.

The new planting and first fruits.

The loss in body of our Teacher

but the gain of our Savior through the spirit.

It's a time of ultimate happiness and

profound mystery and grace.

(takes out wafer)

Who would like to join me in communion?

ROY and CONNIE are the first to line up. STANLEY drifts back behind the CROWD.

EXT. PRE-DAWN SERVICE ENTRANCE

STANLEY sits in the rear seat of a TAXI CAB. HE watches as WORKMEN finish erecting a billboard SIGN depicting a SAINTLY, ANGLOFIED JESUS between the grinning FACES of REV. CLAIRBOLT WILLY and PRESIDENT ROY GOODBOY. The caption reads: 'WITNESSES TO THE SECOND GOING'. STANLEY'S mood is somber.

MARVIN leans into the TAXI window next to Stanley.

MARVIN

(low, uncertain voice)

I'm you and you're me...

STAN

What?

MARVIN

We're the two hands of flawed humanity.

STANLEY tries to nod. He searches MARVIN's face.

MARVIN

--If the people want to eat the truth;

--give them television --our kind.

HE gives something to STANLEY.

INSERT: It's a VIDEOCASSETTE TAPE LABELED: 'THE GOSPEL RECORDED BY MARVIN'.

STANLEY smiles his thanks.

The CAMERA MOVES BACK from the driveway up the sloping hill. ALL is empty. All is quiet. ALMA the cook stands in profile looking up to the heavens. SHE turns casually with an expression of patient satisfaction, but SEES nothing.

The CAMERA continues its retreat. In the space seen before, where the little beings frolicked, lies only a CHILD'S SKI-MASK. The silhouettes of trees betray a serenity before the DAWN'S LIGHT. MUSIC UP but LIGHTLY

CREDITS: ON ONE THIRD OF SCREEN -- (Pattern shifts to other thirds)

TWO THIRDS OF SCREEN (Shifting) Brief VIDEOTAPE (B.& W.) SCENES
'Recorded by Marvin' (M.O.S.*):

CONNIE AT THE AIRPORT.

WILLY'S HOUSE

SECURITY AIDE 2's FACE

MUSIC UP FULL.

CONNIE and ROY in PROVOCATIVE ENCOUNTER (*LOUNGE*) then (*CAR*)

ROY and WILLY in EMBRACE.

From CLIMAX: STROBE EFFECT SLOWED DOWN to the SPEED of poorly resolved SLIDES. FACES of WILLY, ROY and CONNIE impassive and indifferent.
STANLEY'S STRUGGLE...

JESUS mocked, beaten and shot.

FADE to BLACK

MUSIC DOWN. CREDITS END

Original Title: T he R eturn O f J esus



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