



A SCREENPLAY

BY

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PLEASE NOTE:

Shading has been
utilized to delineate
flashback sequences.

The year is 1978 Jimmy Carter was president, Sony introduces the Walkman, and the nations past time has become waiting in line for gas.

It was also the year of the release of a little known documentary about a group of juvenile delinquents and their three-hour session with actual convicts called

Scared Straight

INSIDE OUT

FADE IN:

EXT. AERIAL VIEW - FLOWERS - LOMPOC, CALIFORNIA

Slow pan in on police transport bus. Destination medium security prison. Slow zoom in on one prisoner staring out the window. He is DANNY BELSON, early 30's, good looking, cold and distant. As he sits disgusted and alone we dissolve to another time when his best days were before him.

CUT TO:

INT. LOS ANGELES THEATRE DRESSING ROOM - DANNY - NIGHT

Friends as well as unknowns congratulate him on his performance. As the last of them file out, a beautiful woman embraces him from behind while he begins to remove his makeup.

HOLLY

Oh, Danny, you were wonderful. You said you were an actor, but I had no idea you could act.

DANNY

Thanks a lot.

HOLLY

You know what I mean. In this town everyone's an actor.

DANNY

I know what you mean. When I was a waiter, I use to ...

They are interrupted by a small bespectacled man. Though he has the look of an accountant, he is Danny's agent, HAROLD GOLDSTEIN (HARRY).

DANNY

(continuing; to Harry)

Harry!

Danny whispers to Holly.

Listen, babe. I'll meet you outside in a couple of minutes. I need to talk to my agent and finish up in here.

HOLLY

OK, star.

(CONTINUED)

She bends to kiss Danny, but seeing his face full of cold cream, declines. With a long envious look from Harry, she exits. Excited, Danny removes the cream and crosses to Harry, who still gazes at the spot where Holly use to be. Danny shakes his arm to get attention but to no avail. Nonchalantly Harry responds.

HARRY

You were great, kid.

DANNY

So, were they out there?

HARRY

There were a lot of people out there, kid.

DANNY

You know who, the people from the soap.

HARRY

Yea, they said something about expanding your character. But I'll believe it when I see a contract.

DANNY

Expanding? What the hell does that mean? As it is, I only get three days a month. What are they going to expand it to -- five?

HARRY

I don't know, kid. They're interested, that's enough. In the meantime, I got you a reading for a commercial, Monday.

DANNY

Ah, Harry, I told you no more commercials. I want to do serious and meaningful roles.

HARRY

Listen you little shit. You'll do what I say - or don't you like living at the beach and driving that sporty car. It's work! And work is money. Or maybe you prefer going back to schlepping tables like you were before I signed you.

(CONTINUED)

DANNY

We're not all in it for the money.
There's such thing as art, you know.

HARRY

That's the trouble with actors, they
have no brains. I've got half a
dozen of my clients who would die to
be in your shoes. You want to be in
someone elses. And then I got one
has-been who was on the top three
years ago, but now can't even get
arrested. Take what you can get,
kid.

DANNY

I just don't want to be typed.

HARRY

How can you be type cast? You're a
talented nobody with a few good
credits. This is national exposure
and it's a sure thing.

DANNY

(perking up)

A national, why didn't you say so in
the first place.

Harry hands Danny directions.

HARRY

A group I've worked with in the past
is doing an aftershave. They saw
your beer spot, think you're manly
or some such crap.

Danny looks over the directions and puts them in his wallet.

HARRY

(Continuing)

Don't be late. In fact, go early in
case there is a side to look over.
And dress manly!

DANNY

Okay. But you'll work on the soap
people, right?

(CONTINUED)

HARRY
 Sure, kid. And at the party tonight
 you'll introduce me to the lovely
 that just left.

DANNY
 (Shakes head - smiling)
 You bastard.

CUT TO:

INT. TRANSPORT BUS - DANNY - DAY

Fade back to him staring out the window. A small smile forms and he once again closes his eyes.

CUT TO:

INT. CASTING OFFICE - DAY

An older woman seated behind a desk is arguing with Danny.

DANNY
 What do you mean I'm not big enough?

WOMAN
 I'm sorry, Mr. Belson, you're just
 not what we are looking for.

CUT TO:

INT. TRANSPORT BUS - DANNY - DAY

Lunging forward with his head between his arms, a huge black prisoner noticing Danny is
 Disturbed begins to hassle him.

PRISONER
 What's you all bent out of shape for for? This is my
 third time back inside in the last seven years. Gets to
 be like summer camp, man.

Danny ignores him. As the sound of laughter from the other prisoners starts to echo,
 he once more stares out the window.

CUT TO:

INT. DANCE STUDIO - NIGHT

The laughter continues into another flashback. The upstairs of a converted warehouse turned into a dance studio and drama workshop. Currently, all the mirrors are covered with black sheets for Ellie's workshop. ELLIE is in her mid-forties and although overweight, quite attractive. She possesses more of a motherly quality than that of a coach instructing her students. A hilarious improvisation is in progress and as it comes to an end ellie rises and addresses the actors in the improv.

ELLIE

That was wonderful. Only Jake, don't try so hard to get the laugh. You are funny, just let it come naturally. Liz, dear, that was much better. You're starting to follow your instincts.

She addresses the entire class.

ELLIE

(Continuing)

Well, people, that was a very good session. Just a couple of more things and we'll wrap it up. First, the Talent One Agency is looking for new faces, so all of you who are in need of representation, get those pictures to them. Second, for those of you who haven't seen Danny's play, this weekend is your last chance. Believe me it's worth it. Well, if no one has anything to add, we'll see you all next week.

JAKE

Excuse me, Ellie, but aren't you forgetting you're going to be with your jailbirds the next couple of weeks?

ELLIE

Oh, you're right, Jake. Thank you. although I don't appreciate your referring to my boys that way. Many are just misunderstood or misguided...

(CONTINUED)

DANNY

(Interrupting)

Yea, like misunderstood rapists and murderers, and misguided drug addicts.

They all laugh.

ELLIE

(Clapping her hands)

Now Class, that will be enough. We will all meet three weeks from tonight then. Danny, can you stay after a few minutes?

The others leave Danny alone with Ellie.

DANNY

Thanks for the plug, ellie. I would like to know what you thought of my performance. I really respect your...

ELLIE

(Interrupting)

Some other time, Danny. I need to talk to you.

DANNY

If it's about that crack I made, I was just...

ELLIE

(Interrupting)

Danny, how is your professional quest coming?

DANNY

Well the soap people can't decide if they want to expand on my small character or create a new major one. So, in the meantime the big executives in all their wisdom have me unemployed.

ELLIE

Are you still being sent out for hoods and street types?

(CONTINUED)

DANNY

Yea, but the dumb ass casting people think that the only street types come from New York.

ELLIE

How would you like to learn first hand?

DANNY

What do you mean?

ELLIE

Well as you know, I successfully directed a production of "Short Eyes" using inmates of the State prison at Lompoc. The warden was so impressed, he is allowing me to try a workshop inside the walls.

DANNY

So what's that got to do with me?

ELLIE

I need an assistant. Someone who will blend in with the men.

DANNY

Thanks a lot.

ELLIE

No, I didn't mean it like that. What I meant is that you have the kind of presence the men will respect. And I hope they won't intimidate you.

DANNY

Wait. Let me get this straight. You want us to go inside the walls of a penitentiary to teach a bunch of cons acting? What a trip!

ELLIE

For two weeks, 4 hours a day. But don't expect to see Cagney or Bogart. There are no public enemies in this institution. These are boys who have made mistakes and need help and guidance. I think acting can achieve this for some of them.

(CONTINUED)

DANNY
 (Imitating Cagney)
 Ma, Ma, when do we leave?

ELLIE
 We drive up on Sunday, go to work on Monday. By the way, I can only offer you room and board and one hell of an experience.

DANNY
 The only thing is, if my agent calls I've got to return. Fair enough?

ELLIE
 I'll be the only woman ever allowed beyond the walls and you'll be the only person who ever received a two-week sentence.

As they laugh and start to leave, Ellie turns out the lights.

CUT TO:

INT. TRANSPORT BUS - DANNY -DAY

Deep in thought, he is interrupted by the jerking of the bus as it breaks to a halt. He quickly turns his head trying to see out the back window. He knows what he will see. We pan out revealing the large grey dingy buildings with hundreds of arms waiving through the bars. Zoom back to Danny's dreadful stare, as a whistle sounds and the prisoners file out of the bus.

CUT TO:

This scene uses only voice-overs as we pan the entire prison during the prisoners indoctrination.

VOICE OF GUARD
 Listen up, listen up. Any time you are addressed by an officer of the State you will look forward and shut your mouths. Do you understand?

VOICES OF PRISONERS
 (Loudly)
 Yes, sir!

VOICE OF GUARD
 You will not talk unless spoken to.
 Is that clear?

(CONTINUED)

VOICE OF PRISONERS

Yes, sir!

VOICE OF GUARD

For the duration of your stay here, you are the property of the State of California. You have no freedom. You fucked that away! This is a medium security correctional institution. That does not mean we are not watching you at all times. Is that clear?

VOICE OF PRISONERS

Yes, sir!

VOICE OF GUARD

There are rules which you must obey. Read them and put them to memory. If you can't read or you don't understand, get help. There are no excuses.

FADE OUT:

FADE IN:

INT. INDOCTRINATION ROOM - GUARD - DAY

As his speech comes to an end, the prisoners stand in a straight line. GUARD is a tall black man in his late 40's who is a retired Drill Sergeant which gives a military flare to his indoctrinations.

GUARD

(Continuing)

Is that understood?

PRISONERS

Yes, sir!

GUARD

As I call out your names drop your pants and bend forward.

As he calls out the names, each prisoner in turn follows his directions.

GUARD

(Continuing)

Abdolla, Adams, Arnez, Barry,
Belson.

(CONTINUED)

A guard with a glove steps in back of Danny. He bends forward and as we zoom in on his face, we see a look of disgust and he closes his eyes.

CUT TO:

INT. WARDEN'S OFFICE - DAY

Flashback to Danny and Ellie's indoctrination. WARDEN SALDONO, a small grey haired ex-cop in his late 40's.

WARDEN

... and I hope you realize that I had to pull a lot of strings to allow this workshop to take place. Remember, if there is any trouble it will not only be my head but the end of the project.

ELLIE

I don't foresee any trouble, Mr. Saltono. The boys behaved admirably during the rehearsals for "Short Eyes."

WARDEN

I must admit that some of them have shown marked improvement. But keep in mind that these men are streetwise and very deceptive. Their whole existence depends on their ability to act. Now, Danny, has Ellie told you anything about the men; their backgrounds?

DANNY

Yea, a little.

WARDEN

You realize you will be in the presence of addicts, pushers, thieves, and even murderers. You are prepared to deal with this, I hope. Remember, these men will respect nothing and no one. Ellie is the only person who has been able to spark any interest from them.

DANNY

I understand.

(CONTINUED)

WARDEN

Good. Now we are going to have to walk through two cell blocks to get to the rec room. News travels fast in this small community, so the entire population knows you're here. I don't want you to be shocked by what you might hear. Well, if there are no questions, let's go.

CUT TO:

INT. CELL BLOCK CORRIDOR - DAY

Escorted by guards on either side of them, the trio receive cat calls and obscenities from the prisoners, as they walk through the cell block. Although he is uneasy, Danny doesn't visibly show his fear until a strange sound begins to roar over all the calls and whistles. A prisoner known as GIGOLO begins to sing his version of Elvis' hit "Jailhouse Rock." Gigolo is a tall well-built blond of 25 who is so handsome some might consider him pretty.

GIGOLO

(Singing)

Warden threw a party in the Lumpoc Jail. Prison band was there and they began to wail. The band was jumpin' and the joint began to sing.

All of the other prisoners join him.

PRISONERS

You should of heard those fucking jail-birds sing.

As the prisoners sing, backup guards begin to file in the cell block. Danny stares at Gigolo.

PRISONERS

Let's rock, let's rock. Everybody in the whole cell block, was dancin' to the jailhouse rock. Let's rock, let's rock.

Singing continues as we pan the entire block.

CUT TO:

INT. CELL BLOCK - DANNY - DAY

Echoes of the song are heard as Danny, now a prisoner, walks the same cell block unknown and unnoticed. Suddenly a cold chill comes over him that stops him momentarily. He looks up to see Gigolo's deadly stare once more. Danny moves on as we zoom in slowly on Gigolo's wicked smile.

CUT TO:

INT. DANNY'S CELL - DANNY - DAY

He stands at the door of his cell as we pan it in its entirety. Exhausted, Danny crosses to the bottom bunk and collapses. As he lies on his back, he again begins to reminisce.

CUT TO:

INT. LARGE RECREATION ROOM - DAY

Three inmates are waiting as Danny, Ellie, Warden Saldo and the guards enter. JERRY STEELE, 27, looks a lot like Danny. Tough and sure of himself. RICKY SALAS, 20, small and weasel-like. RONALD BASORDIE aka BABY HUEY, 22, big, fat, extremely hairy, very funny and very dangerous. Seeing Ellie, they cross to her. Suddenly a guard bursts in and goes to the Warden. Although he whispers, Jerry hears the name David Gillian and something about a suicide. The Warden and guards rush out as the remaining 7 members of the drama group enter. Wearing clothes that accent their physiques, the men look very mean and imposing. However, Danny notices how they relax their muscles after they enter. A gentleness comes over them as one by one they greet Ellie. PATRICK O'DONNELL, at 35, the oldest of the group, is short but tough. After hugging Ellie, he crosses to Jerry and Ricky.

PATRICK

Hey, the zoo keeper ran out of here
like he had something up his ass.
What's up?

Jerry takes Patrick aside and all but Ellie and Danny follow forming a huddle around him. The remaining members of the group are NICK SALARNO, 31, very handsome, possessing the best build of the group and a slight New Jersey accent. RAMON DIEZ, 25 a Mexican American; MIKE BENDER, 20, very tall, red haired, basketball type; VINCENT WONG, 32, Asian American gang leader; DONNY VAN RANDLE, 21, black and sensitive, built like a welter weight boxer; JACKIE THOMPSON, 28, big, black and proud.

JERRY

Well, I didn't get it all but I
think Gigolo's latest chicken just
checked out.

(CONTINUED)