

CHANNING TATUM

TARON EGERTON

ZAZIE BEETZ

KOCKROACH

DIRECTED BY
MATT ROSS

BLACK BEAR

CAA

RANGE

KOCKROACH

Black Bear is excited to present **KOCKROACH**, a bold, stylish, entirely original crime epic set in the underworld of New York. **CHANNING TATUM** (*Deadpool & Wolverine*, *Magic Mike* franchise, *Jump Street* franchise) will star opposite BAFTA-nominated **TARON EGERTON** (*Kingsman* franchise, *Rocketman*, *Carry-On*) and Emmy-nominated **ZAZIE BEETZ** (*Atlanta*, *Deadpool 2*). Visionary filmmaker **MATT ROSS** (Academy Award-nominated *Captain Fantastic*) will direct from a script he wrote with **JONATHAN AMES** (*You Were Never Really Here*), based on the novel of the same name. **ANDREW LAZAR** (*American Sniper*, *Nyad*, *Get Smart*) will produce for **Mad Chance Productions**.

Kockroach is the story of a mysterious stranger who takes on New York's criminal underworld, transforming himself into a larger-than-life crime boss in a city where power is everything.

KOCKROACH is the ultimate super villain origin story – an epic tale of the rise of a new breed of gangster. Channing Tatum will embody the physicality and darkness of this enigmatic protagonist, joined by *Kingsman* star Taron Egerton and *Joker* star Zazie Beetz. This powerhouse cast will unite with director Matt Ross who will capture the scale and humanity of this story to deliver a groundbreaking reimagination of the gangster genre that will deliver on everything modern audiences want to see in cinemas and become an instant classic around the world.

KOCKROACH

Screenplay
by
Jonathan Ames

CURRENT DRAFT
By
Matt Ross

Based on the novel
KOCKROACH
by
Tyler Knox

A story, for example, something that could never happen, an adventure. It would have to be beautiful and hard as steel and make people ashamed of their existence.

JEAN-PAUL SARTRE

La Nausée

"As Gregor Samsa awoke one morning from uneasy dreams he found himself transformed in his bed into a gigantic Cockroach."

FRANZ KAFKA

The Metamorphosis

INT. MAYFLOWER HOTEL. DAY

A COCKROACH crawls along a cord, onto a portable tape recorder, finally pausing over a bright RED BUTTON.

A finger FLICKS the cockroach away, presses this red 'record' button on the tape recorder - and the cassette tape rolls.

Chyron: January 1976. Washington D.C.

In a hotel suite of the Mayflower Hotel in Washington, D.C., MICKEY "MITE" MULLIGAN inhales on his cigarette. Across from him sits LUCY, a young female journalist.

LUCY

We're recording now, Mr. Mulligan.

MITE

Call me, Mite. Everyone does. All my life. Like I'm some kind of parasite.

He exhales deeply, ruminative.

MITE (CONT'D)

Life ain't fair, whaddya gonna do. But we're here to talk about the Boss, ain't we?

He blows out a big ring of smoke.

MITE (CONT'D)

I'll tell you this, sweet pea. This eight ball here. Ain't nobody could make this up.

EXT. PRIMORDIAL EARTH.

Rivers of flame. Orange skies. A smoldering, eternal night.

Chyron: The Devonian Age. 361 Million Years Ago.

DAVID ATTENBOROUGH (V.O.)

At the end of the Devonian age, a great cataclysm occurred.

Atop a mountain of granite, gazing upon a burning world, seemingly bereft of life below - is a solitary COCKROACH.

DAVID ATTENBOROUGH (V.O.)

This disaster destroyed a great majority of the newly evolved species on Planet Earth.

Emerging from shadowy crevices, a glistening WAVE of THOUSANDS of cockroaches swarm forward, joining the first.

DAVID ATTENBOROUGH (V.O.)
 And it was from the shadow of this mass extinction that the arthropod of the genus Blatella, species Germanica - the humble cockroach - first emerged.

They all stand alongside the first cockroach - their leader. Surveying the beauty of the land, their land: a fiery hellscape, mountainous jutting crags of black rock, streaming lava, and a sky of sulfuric acid.

INT. BATHROOM. FLOPHOUSE. NIGHT.

Across the urine-stained tiles of a flophouse bathroom, KOCKROACH (*K. for short and a cockroach*) scurries from behind a sink.

Chyron: 1957. Times Square, New York City.

A door opens, light blasting Kockroach - and he freezes.

A HUMAN enters, his enormous legs, like sequoias, tower high above Kockroach. The human SHOUTS and a gigantic brogue rises up - a Solar Eclipse engulfing K.

As the giant shadow descends, K. SQUEALS, darts frantically across the floorboards - and DIVES into a crevice, a mere second before the shoe SLAMS onto the floor.

INT. CREVICE. FLOPHOUSE. NIGHT.

Darkness. K. buried in the crevice.
 Thunderous URINATION and a FLUSH echo from the bathroom.

K. peeks out - the human predator drops objects unknown to K. (a LETTER, some PHOTOS, a RING) onto a desk, then flops on the bed, unlacing his shoes.

This is his chance - K. dashes across the floor!

But the predator sees K. and again, instantly SLAMS a shoe down - this time CRUSHING poor K.

Kockroach - squashed, broken, but still alive - limps a few feeble steps before collapsing. Trembling violently - dying - he can only look up, helpless, at the monstrous human, his killer.

The human tosses his suit on the bed. Naked now, he climbs onto a chair and throws a sheet over a beam, ties it around his neck - and steps off the chair.

The human claws at the noose, GASPING, thrashing about wildly, until his bulging eyes find a dying K., on the floor.

Kockroach, mutilated, barely alive himself, peers at this dying human.

They stare at one another - deep into each other's souls. Human at Kockroach. Kockroach at human.

Their last GASPS are now in perfect sync - before a final, and mutual, DEATH RATTLE.
Their eyelids both shutter closed.
And they die - at the exact same second in time.

INT. FLOPHOUSE. MORNING.

Sunlight beams through thin curtains, filling the room with streaming dust particles.

In the exact spot where Kockroach expired - there is now a NAKED HUMAN BODY. K. has undergone a full METAMORPHOSIS.

K.'s new body is an exact replica of the former dangling man, but a younger, more muscular, and hairless, version.

K., feeling the sun on him, BLINKS awake. His eyes dart about - taking in this environment. Something is very wrong. He brings his PROTHORACIC TARSUS up to his eyes - what are these grotesque wiggling digits?!

He feels his head: where are his antennae?!

Where is his armored THORAX and what is this fleshy white torso?!

He writhes on the floor, flailing about, convulsing in panic.

And then he sees, hanging above him - the human, his killer.

Terrified, on all fours, like an insect - K. scampers as fast as he can, racing toward the crack in the wall. He dives for it - and SLAMS his head into the wall. Not yet grasping how large he is - he's stunned.

MALE VOICE (O.S.)
Keep it down, you bastard!

The sound of a nearby predator instantly brings K. back to his senses, and he scrambles under the bed.

Here in the dark it is safer, K. curls up, making himself very small. A calm comes over him, he cleans his hands and arms with his tongue.

DAVID ATTENBOROUGH (V.O.)
Cockroaches comprehend neither the past, nor the concept of the future. Existing only in the present, they are awesome machines of pure survival. This cockroach doesn't wonder how this transformation has happened. When his right leg was pulled off by a playful mouse, he did not bemoan his fate.

FLASHBACK: A mouse pulls off K.'s cockroach leg.

DAVID ATTENBOROUGH (V.O.)
Instead, he learned to survive with five legs until he grew a new limb at his next molt. When food is scarce, cockroaches simply find a solution. First they eat their dead, then they eat their young, and then, they eat each other.

K., the naked human, continues to groom himself.

INT. BEDROOM. FLOPHOUSE. NIGHT

Cockroach awakens - and is instantly alert.
He peers out from beneath the bed - darkness. No predators.

On all fours, using his arms and legs like cockroach legs, he emerges from underneath the bed.

He stops, peering up - and there he is. The dangling human.
K. recognizes death.
To be sure, he swats at the dangling man.

The man sways and K., still on all fours, hops back. Yes. The man is dead. And K. is safe from this dead human.

His soft white thorax makes a GRUMBLING SOUND. K. is hungry.
He crawls on his belly, sniffing at crevices, exploring the room.

On the desk, he spots the FEDORA.

He reaches up, his hand like a claw, his fingers moving like pincers, but he can't reach. He grasps and grasps, but it's too far. Some instinct forces him up - and he's standing!

He sways, almost flops into the desk, and steadies himself.

On the desk is the fedora, a photograph, a ring, and the letter the human had been looking at earlier.

Kockroach claws the hat until he's able to grip it. He licks it. Then takes a bite out of the rim, ripping into the felt. He chomps, but something's not right and he spits it out.

He picks up the letter, eyeing the strange scrawling:

***Dear Jack, I'm sorry I changed my mind. I don't hate you, but maybe I do. Good luck with your life. You ruined mine.
- Nancy***

Kockroach sniffs the letter, then stuffs the entire thing in his mouth and chomps. Not to his liking. He spits it out.

He picks up the photograph, sniffs. An image of the dangling man, wearing sunglasses and the fedora, sitting on a beach, a woman in a bikini holding the human's arm.

Kockroach stares at the woman. Closer and closer. He feels something very strange, a new and indescribable sensation.

He looks down to see an odd appendage in his middle has swollen and is sticking out!

He SCREAMS in utter horror at the sight of his erect penis. Causing him to lose his balance and tumble toward the wall. Hands fumbling, he accidentally slaps the light switch, the room instantly goes DARK, and he CRASHES to the floor.

Kockroach flips to his stomach and scurries under the bed.

K. peers out from beneath the bed: he touched something on the wall that made the light go off.

He crawls back out, remembers that he can stand, and on unsteady legs, rises up by the switch. He touches it with his hand and the light comes back on!

Then he turns it off. Off and on. Off and on. Light! Dark! Light! Dark! That's how the humans have done it!

FLASHBACKS: Dozens of moments in his life as a cockroach - when K. was safe in darkness - in bathrooms, kitchens, lobbies, and then a light came on, followed by human predators!

The mystery of light has been solved!

He totters toward the bathroom, but his legs are unsteady, he takes odd, loping steps, spastic and erratic, his arms jerking out like probing antennae, his index fingers and middle fingers snapping like pincers.

INT. BATHROOM. FLOPHOUSE. NIGHT.

He searches and finds the bathroom switch, flipping it on and off and on.

He turns and in a mirror - a HUMAN is standing right there!

He SCREAMS! A strange, high-pitched SCREECH of pure terror, causing him to reel back, he smacks his head on the edge of the bathtub with a loud THUNK, knocking himself immediately unconscious.

INT. BATHROOM. FLOPHOUSE. NIGHT.

K. BLINKS awake. He pulls himself up by the sink, and peeks at the mirror. The human is still there!

Instinctively adopting an offensive posture - intimidating this threat by raising his arms like talons and snapping his fingers like pincers, K. grimaces and HISSES at the human.

And the human does the same thing right back!

K. stares at this strange human. And an idea of such profound horror as to be almost incomprehensible forms in K.'s mind.

He leans into the mirror, daring to be very close to this monster. He tilts his head to the right. Then to the left.

The reflected human head tilts to the right. And to the left. At the exact same time.

K. scratches the human face with his claws, but his hands/pincers BUMP into glass!

He is somehow in the glass. A look of pure repulsion and utter terror flashes over his face.

DAVID ATTENBOROUGH (V.O.)

The extent of the disaster that has befallen this cockroach is immediately clear. He has become, of all things, the sworn enemy of his colony and his entire species. This cockroach, to his utter horror, has become a human being.

Distracted by his extraordinary hearing, K. turns to the DRIPPING FAUCET. Water!

He wraps his mouth around the faucet and sucks deeply, but nothing, other than a few drips, come out.

To his left, he sees the TOILET.

FLASHBACKS: To all the HUMANS, one after another, he has seen sitting upon such things. And to Kockroach himself, walking along a toilet seat, peering down into the sea of water.

It's just like this bowl! He dips his head into the toilet and drinks and drinks and drinks, until his belly is swollen and he can barely breath.

He returns to examine himself in the mirror. All at once he realizes where he has seen this face before!
He stumbles/twitches toward the bedroom.

INT. BEDROOM. FLOPHOUSE. NIGHT.

K. picks up the photograph off the desk. It's his face!

He spins around - the dead human hanging from the sheet also has his face!

He yanks the human down, the body hitting the floor with a THUD. K. pounces, striking it repeatedly, stopping only when he hears his stomach GROWL.

He decides to eat it - there should only be one Kockroach!

He sinks his teeth into the face - his jaw muscles savagely powerful - and swallows a large amount of flesh. Purposely regurgitates what he has swallowed, then slurps up the regurgitation.

He continues, ripping the flesh from the dead man's face.

INT. BEDROOM. FLOPHOUSE. NIGHT.

Kockroach, satiated from his feast, is asleep under the bed.

A BANGING ON THE DOOR - and he's instantly awake.

FRONT DESK CLERK (O.S.)
Smith - whatever the fuck your name
is - you in there?

K. freezes. This is danger! A predator!

FRONT DESK CLERK (O.S.) (CONT'D)
No one's seen your face since three
days. Smith?!

More BANGING on the door.

FRONT DESK CLERK (O.S.) (CONT'D)
Your week's up tomorrow and I want
you out! I got complaints about
noises and smells! Flush the
toilet, Jesus Christ!

K. hears this predator's footsteps recede.

K. mimics the man's voice. At first, it's HIGH-PITCHED,
TWITTERING, but with a DEEP RUMBLING undertone.

KOCKROACH
Flush the toilet, Jesus Christ!

He tries it again. Again and again until the tone is almost
the same sounds the predator made.

KOCKROACH (CONT'D)
Flush the toilet, Jesus Christ!

K. crawls from under the bed, before remembering that he can
stand. He's trapped in this box with humans outside, trying
to get in. He is no longer safe.

He rushes - spastic and flailing - to the door. With his
pincers, he hits it. And again. The wood does not move.

He flails over to the window, pushing the curtains aside. The
window is partially open, just enough for him to fit his head
out, sideways.

He shoves his head out the window - his face illuminated by
the hotel's blinking red neon sign.

Down the street, glowing with vibrant luminosity, is Times
Square. Maybe there's food in all that activity.

Rain falls on K.'s naked torso. He shivers, suddenly cold.

INT. BEDROOM. FLOPHOUSE. NIGHT

He flail-walks over to the desk, shivering, steps over the
faceless body, and picks up the photograph. In the photo, the
human wears coverings, like armor.

On the bed - the man's armor!

Using the photo as a guide, he dresses in the dead human's armor: but he puts on the t-shirt as underwear, his underwear is around his neck, the suit jacket is inside out, and the pants are on backward.

Kockroach, now protected, contemplates the shoes - the very instrument of his death. They look so small now. No threat.

He slips into them, leaving the laces untied. Now the fedora to protect his head, the chunk still missing from the brim.

From inside the jacket, he pulls out a wallet, filled with cash. Bites it. Not food. Replaces it and withdraws sunglasses. Same ones the man wore in the photo. He places them on his face.

The sunglasses darken the room. Familiar darkness. This appeals to K. He makes a BUZZING SOUND of pleasure.

He examines the photo one more time, checking to see if his armor matches the human's. It does.
He notices that the human has a big smile on his face.

INT. BATHROOM. FLOPHOUSE. NIGHT.

Kockroach's face is reflected in the bathroom mirror, practicing the same smile as the human.
K.'s smile disconnected, broad and wide. His teeth flashing.

DAVID ATTENBOROUGH (V.O.)
This plucky cockroach imagines that this fierce grimace, displaying his mandibles, must have some purpose in human culture, most likely a warning against predators, and he reminds himself that, to keep danger away, he must wear it at all times.

Kockroach is now ready for the world outside this box.

INT. BEDROOM, FLOPHOUSE. NIGHT.

At the wood barrier again, pawing the doorknob, but nothing happens. He twists his digits around the metal orb, pulls - and the entire door RIPS COMPLETELY OFF ITS HINGES.

DAVID ATTENBOROUGH (V.O.)
The humble cockroach, it turns out, has tremendous strength.
(MORE)

DAVID ATTENBOROUGH (V.O.) (CONT'D)
Estimated to be 30 to 40 percent
more - relative to its size - than
human beings.

K. drops the useless wooden slab, and creeps, with great caution, through the threshold.

INT. HALLWAY. FLOPHOUSE. NIGHT.

A single light bulb BUZZES on and off. But no predators.

K. slides along the wall toward the staircase, smiling his warning grimace, his arms shooting in all directions, his fingers shaped like pincers. Defensively, he blurts out warnings to all predators, over and over again:

KOCKROACH
FLUSH THE TOILET, JESUS CHRIST!

EXT. FLOPHOUSE. 45TH STREET. NIGHT.

K., in his fedora and sunglasses, his protective warning smile-grimace plastered on his face, emerges from the hotel.

BLARING horns, chrome Thunderbird Bel Airs and El Dorados SWISH by, brightly-colored FLASHING neon lights illuminating the rain-swept streets, sidewalks crammed with masses of HUMANS - the heart of New York City in 1957.

And K. is loosed upon the world.

EXT. ALLEYWAY. TIMES SQUARE. NIGHT.

In a dark alleyway, K. rummages through a garbage can, desperately searching for food. A beef rib, swarming with delicious white maggots! He slurps them off the bone, catching every one with this tongue.

Above the alley, a MAN leans out of his apartment window.

MAN
Get the hell outta here!

K. pauses. Stares up at the man. Then in a perfect echo.

KOCKROACH
Get the hell outta here!

MAN
Ain't you got no self-respect?!

KOCKROACH
Ain't you got no self-respect?!

The man, confused, pauses.

MAN
Fuck you, you cocksucker!

KOCKROACH
Fuck you, you cocksucker!

The man SLAMS his window down.

K. resumes foraging, discovers a moldy loaf of bread and inhales it in one swallow, like an animal.

A CAT jumps on the garbage can next to Kockroach and K., terrified, reels back, raises his arms like fierce talons - and HISSES at the cat.

The cat stands its ground - bares its teeth, HISSES BACK!

K. SQUEALS and, herky-jerky, runs for his life.

EXT. TIMES SQUARE. NIGHT.

K. bursts from the alley into Times Square, into the belly of its neon lights and teeming human throngs.

DAVID ATTENBOROUGH (V.O.)
Nightly now, after feasting, this
cockroach makes tentative forays
into the world of humans,
understanding that his very
survival depends on his ability to
blend into this foreign colony.

K., with his deeply spastic walk and broad, toothy smile, slides along the edge of the buildings, away from cars. Bits of human language ECHO through the night: *"Lookin' for a date, dreamboat? It'll cost you five; "I like it dark, Mac;" "Rain's comin', nothin' you can do;" "Move along, pal."*

DAVID ATTENBOROUGH (V.O.)
For if the humans see him for what
he is, they will surely squash him
with their enormous feet.

Through the sea of foot traffic - K. now trails a BUSINESSMAN, analyzing his every movement, learning how to be human.

The businessman turns, and K. abruptly stops, a wide smile plastered on his face.

The man turns back around, continues on his way.

K. follows, again perfectly imitating the man's walk.

The man spins and again - K. freezes.

BUSINESSMAN

What are you queer or somethin'?

KOCKROACH

What are you queer or somethin'?

The businessman stares; K. smiles, beaming his warning smile.

EXT. ALLEYWAY. TIMES SQUARE. DAWN.

As the sun begins to rise, K., who is nocturnal, scurries behind a restaurant's backdoor, past the garbage cans, and burrows under a pile of WOODEN CRATES.

Hidden at the bottom, in the interior of the pile, now secure in the dark place, is his lair of stacked crates. K. removes his clothing, licking and cleaning each garment.

He licks his hands, uses them to clean his face, then grooms his naked body with his tongue. He practices overheard scraps of language, his voice constantly changing tone and pitch.

KOCKROACH

Lookin' for a date, dreamboat?
It'll cost you five. I like it
dark, Mac. Rain's comin', nothin'
you can do. Girls, girls, girls!
Fuck you, you cocksucker!

Done grooming, K. curls up - and instantly falls asleep.

EXT. BROADWAY. TIMES SQUARE. NIGHT.

MICKEY "MITE" MULLIGAN, one of the many hustlers standing in front of a row of Strip Clubs, hands out fliers of half-naked women to anyone who will take one.

MITE

Girls, girls, girls!

JOHNNY POMPS, a massive mountain of a man with a swirling pompadour, pushes his way through the crowd.

As soon as Mite sees him, his face drains - and he bolts!

Mite slides a hard right into Kockroach's alleyway - trips past the garbage cans, and dives into the crates, under piles of garbage, burying himself as deep as he can.

Kockroach - naked, eyes wide, hidden in an adjoining crate - blinks at Mite in abject terror. This predator is only inches away. K. sniffs, smelling Mite's human fear. It calms him.

Johnny Pomps bursts into alleyway, Mite nowhere to be seen.

JOHNNY POMPS

Mite! Fuckin' thief, I know you're here! Break your fuckin' neck!

Seeing no movement, he runs down the alley, and out the other end.

Mite waits for silence, then climbs out, sprinting in the opposite direction.

K., the danger now passed, hears his STOMACH GROWLING. It's time to feed.

EXT. ALLEYWAY. NIGHT.

K., his armor back on (hat, sunglasses, suit), rummages through garbage cans. Empty containers. Nothing to eat.

EXT. TIMES SQUARE. NIGHT.

K. stumbles along, searching the ground for food, clutching his stomach, twisting from intense hunger pains. He freezes, eyes WIDE.

EXT. AUTOMAT. TIMES SQUARE. NIGHT.

Only feet from K's bulging eyes: a palace of food!

Inside the Automat: brightly-colored fruit, thick sandwiches, cakes with mint green pastel frosting, red berry pies - glisten in the fluorescent light, displayed in tiny slots.

ALICE GRANT, African-American, conservatively dressed with cat-eyed glasses, reads a newspaper by the window: a photograph of DETECTIVE FALLON next to "*TIMES SQUARE CANNIBAL STILL LOOSE!*"

But K. only sees the food; fingers, like pincers, twittering with excitement.

INT. AUTOMAT. TIMES SQUARE. NIGHT.

Mite, still sweaty and out of breath from escaping Johnny Poms, jostles through the Automat – a bustling melting pot with every strata of New York City: sailors, jazz musicians, cops, politicians, poets – past TAB, a peroxide-blond male hustler.

TAB

When's our big date, Mighty Mite?

MITE

Watch your mouth, queer.

Mite drops a plate of apple pie in front of Alice.

MITE (CONT'D)

Got your favorite, dollface.

Alice pauses, smiles.

ALICE

I told you, you don't have to buy me food every time you see me.

MITE

You gonna rob me of my greatest pleasure in life? Beautiful girl like you deserves the world.

ALICE

Johnny Poms was just in here, telling everyone about his plans for your spleen.

MITE

Let him try. I got more than one.

Alice laughs, but she and Mite are immediately distracted, as on the other side of the window – practically vibrating with uncontrolled glee – is K., seemingly staring directly at Mite. Mite pauses. Raises his eyebrows.

MITE (CONT'D)

What? Me? What?!

K.'s fingers continue to snap, like he's beckoning Mite.

EXT. AUTOMAT. TIMES SQUARE. NIGHT.

K., face bathed in light, stares up, marveling at a GIANT HUMAN FACE thirty feet in the air, smoke billowing from a strange object in his mouth. (The famous Times Square Camel cigarette ad). A God. Breathing fire. It's awe-inspiring.

MITE

Palsy. You lookin' for somethin'?
Mite can get whatever you need.

Kockroach turns on Mite, adopting his warning smile.
Then, sensing something familiar, he sniffs the air.
He leans closer and inhales.
This is the human from the wooden crate!
This must be the work of the Smoking God!
He's sent this human in a shiny green suit, like a bug.

K. gestures at the Camel ad above his head, the magical smoke billowing from the man's mouth, and emits BUZZING sounds.

MITE (CONT'D)

Smoke? You want smoke?

KOCKROACH

I like it dark, Mac.

MITE

You got the lettuce?

K. stares, so Mite takes out a few bills from his wallet, waves them at K.

Kockroach removes his wallet, finds the same green paper, and waves them right back at Mite.

MITE (CONT'D)

Smoke it is. Whaddya say your name was? Mac?

KOCKROACH

Rain's comin', nothin' you can do.

Mite considers this.

MITE

You one of those Beat poets that hang out at the Automat?

He slaps Kockroach on the shoulder.

MITE (CONT'D)

Stick with me. I'll hitch up the reindeers, take you to Wonderland.

Mite gestures for K. to follow him, but Kockroach hesitates. Then decides to follow the human, who is green like a bug and smells non-threatening, to see what he might learn.

K. follows behind Mite, his spastic walk morphing into a perfect mimicry of Mite's arm-swinging cock walk.

Mite turns - and K. stops.

Mite pauses for a second, then continues to lead the way. Again, K. mimics Mite's walk perfectly.

Mite swings around again!
Again, K. is motionless.

Before Mite can say anything, he spots Johnny Poms running across the street, another GOON by his side.

Mite leaps into a doorway, Kockroach following with lightning speed, squeezing up against Mite.

Johnny Poms and the goon BLUR past.

MITE (CONT'D)
Let's get you some reefer.

KOCKROACH
Can you flush the toilet, Jesus
Christ!

Mite squints, confused, and they cross the street.

EXT. HELL'S KITCHEN APARTMENT. NIGHT.

RONNY, a Marlon Brando wannabe weed dealer in a Stanley Kowalski t-shirt, sucks on a cigarette, appraising K.

RONNY
Why's he wearing sun-glasses and
smiling like that?

MITE
He's a beat, I don't know, whaddya
want from me.

Kockroach fixates on the cigarette in Ronny's mouth. It's the same object that was in the mouth of the large God.

KOCKROACH
Smoke? You want smoke?

RONNY

It's your lucky day, daddy-o. Got myself a shipment just this week.

MITE

You and me need to get square first.

RONNY

Take a bite of air, Mite.

MITE

You know Johnny Pomps's breathing down my neck! I sent you thirty tea-heads in the last two months! You owe me my cuts, at least a hundred, we had a deal.

RONNY

Things change, that's business!

Ronny twists Mite's nose, so hard that Mite collapses to his knees, GROANING in real pain.

Ronny spots a cockroach on the floor next to Mite and stomps.

At the LOUD POPPING SOUND - Kockroach GASPS! Instinctively and immediately, he rips Ronny's hand from Mite's nose and YANKS it back - snapping the arm with a sickening CRACK.

Now it's Ronny who YELPS and collapses to the floor.

K. carefully retrieves the dead cockroach. He stares at it.

MITE

Mac, this joker won't give me my money! Maybe you want to break his other arm?

Mite imitates cracking a bone.

K. places the cockroach, tenderly, in his pocket. He bends down, grabs Ronny's other arm, and yanks it back it. Another loud CRACK, Ronny SCREAMS, and passes out.

MITE (CONT'D)

Holy shit!

KOCKROACH

Move along, pal.

Mite pauses. Then he nods.

MITE

Yeah. Yeah. What's done is done.

Mite digs out Ronny's wallet. It's filled with cash. Mite beams. He gives Ronny a kick for good measure.

MITE (CONT'D)

Should'a played fair.

K. also kicks Ronny.

KOCKROACH

Should'a played fair.

Mite laughs.

MITE

You're alright, you know that?

Kockroach picks up Ronny's fallen cigarette, holding it like it's a sacred object. He inhales deeply, coughs out a cloud of smoke, marveling at the magic of it.

KOCKROACH

Smoke.

This is the first word K. speaks where he truly understands the meaning. It makes him smile.

EXT. HELL'S KITCHEN APARTMENT. NIGHT.

Outside Ronny's Hell Kitchen apartment building, Mite and K. stumble down the block, into the night.

MITE

You got talent, big boy. What can
Mite do as a thank you?

KOCKROACH

Should'a played fair. Smoke.

Mite pauses at a NEWSSTAND, slaps a dollar down next to an OLD CASHIER, half-hidden in a sea of newspapers. One tabloid: *'John Doe had his face eaten, still not identified!'*

Mite grabs a pack of Camels and a bottle of Coca-Cola. He twists off the cap, hands the bottle to K.

MITE

You look hungry.

K. smells the Coca-Cola. He tips the bottle into his mouth. Like he's slurping down a maggot, liquid spilling on his chest, he inhales the entire bottle in one go. Then pauses - COUGHING and GAGGING and BURPING from the carbonation.

Mite hands K. the pack of Camels. K. smells it.
Mite opens the pack and puts a cigarette in K.'s mouth.

MITE (CONT'D)

You're a real character, ain't you?

K. is happy with the cigarette in his mouth. He inhales. But no smoke comes out. He takes it out and looks into it.

Mite produces a lighter, flicks it - and flame!

K. recoils, SQUEALS!

Mite laughs, assuming K. is fooling around; pops a cigarette in his own mouth, lights it, and inhales deeply.

Mite isn't afraid of the flame, so K. puts his cigarette back in his mouth and lets Mite light it.
He imitates Mite - inhaling and exhaling.
He coughs again, but - smoke!

Mite hands over the shiny lighter.
K. mimics Mite and flicks the lighter - an ORANGE FLAME!
K. stares, drawn powerfully into the flame, mesmerized.

FLASHBACK - Somewhere deep in the ancient stored memories of K.'s species, back to the Devonian Age, where K.'s ancestor's Colony stood atop a huge rock formation - swirling flames all around them.

DAVID ATTENBOROUGH (V.O.)

Cockroaches have existed on Earth for more than a quarter of a billion years; fossil evidence shows hundreds of species of cockroaches living among the ferns and mosses that covered Pangaea during the Paleozoic Age, preceding human beings by 220 million years. In all that time, they have evolved very little. It is safe to say that this particular cockroach's mastery of fire would qualify as the most stupendous leap forward in the history of his entire species.

INT. RUSSIAN BATH HOUSE. NIGHT

Mite and K. recline in a tiled steam room, towels wrapped around their waists; Kockroach still wearing his sunglasses and his grimace-smile. SHADOWS of other men in the haze.

Mite can't help but stare at Kockroach's body; it's incredibly muscled, smooth and pristine, with only a stubble of hair on K.'s head, like a Marine's.

MITE

You're like a Greek god.

K., eyes closed, head back, luxuriates in the soothing heat of the steam, comforting like the primordial marshes from Earth's early millennia.

MITE (CONT'D)

Feels good cleaning up a bit, yeah?

K. just nods over and over again, uncomprehending,

MITE (CONT'D)

Listen. I wanna twist your ear.

TWO OLDER MEN, both rotund and dripping in sweat, stumble down the tiers of the steam bath.

MURRAY

Bubbelah! You still looking to peddle those French pornos? I got a distributor in Brooklyn, I think.

MITE

Wrecked crossin' over. Rain-damage. Broke my heart. Whaddya gonna do.

MURRAY

Whaddya gonna do. Who's the Jack LaLanne with the sunglasses?

MITE

Mac, this is Murray. Runs the numbers east of Bowery. Stand up guy.

MURRAY

Good to meetcha, Mac.

KOCKROACH

Let's get you cleaned up.

This tickles Murray.

MURRAY

Ha! You said it! You look after
Mite. He's a friend of mine.

With that, Murray and his friend disappear into the steam.

MITE

We make a good team, you and me.
And I got something to make us both
rich. Interested?

KOCKROACH

Bubbelah!

MITE

You don't even wanna know what it
is?

KOCKROACH

Bubbelah!

MITE

Attaboy! Okay, so we're gonna meet
some fellas. Tomorrow night. I'll
do all the talking. And then you
step in - and WHAM! Just like that!

He makes the sound and yanking motion of how K. broke Ronny's
arm.

MITE (CONT'D)

Think you can do that?

KOCKROACH

You look after Mite. He's a friend
of mine.

Mite pats his chest, over his heart.

MITE

That's right. Mite is your friend.

K., rapidly gaining in his understanding of language, 'Mite'
being the second word he understands after 'smoke,' places
his hand on Mite's chest.

He then points at Mite, and touches his own heart.
He says it with feeling, almost tenderness.

KOCKROACH

Mite.

Mite smiles, genuinely moved.

INT. MEN'S CLOTHING SHOP. DAY.

Kockroach, wearing his underwear incorrectly, is being measured by a TAILOR. K. sniffs the man.

Mite drops a new fedora on K.'s head, appraising the fit.

INT. BARBER SHOP. DAY.

A BARBER's long razor drags across K.'s chin - his eyes WIDE, darting, as the long razor scrapes at his throat.

EXT. 45TH STREET. NIGHT.

Kockroach - now in a beautiful brown suit, brogues, and Fedora - trails Mite along 42nd Street.

Mite stops in front of a restaurant, the sign above their heads: *BECKETT'S PUB AND STEAKHOUSE*. He nods at K.

MITE

Snazzy. Feel good too, yeah?

K. feels the warmth from Mite, his new human companion. He smiles back. No warning hiss, he means it the way humans mean it.

MITE (CONT'D)

Remember that feeling. 'Cause in there. You're gonna need it.

He puts his hand on K.'s shoulder.

MITE (CONT'D)

Whatever happens. Just follow my lead. You'll know what to do.

And Mite swings open the door.

INT. BECKETT'S PUB AND STEAK HOUSE. NIGHT.

Beckett's Pub is a classic Irish '50s Bar and Steak House, a stately bar at the front, a large dining room in the back; the air filled with cigarette smoke and Irish music; WAITERS in white serving jackets flit about, serving pints, steak and potatoes, and platters of cabbage.

Mite spots a table toward the back. At the head is THE SKIPPER, the Clan Chief. A small man with iron-grey hair and thick glasses. His muscular consigliere, TERRY "PUNCHY" WARD, always by his side.

Mite, K. right behind, makes his way towards the Skipper, passing Johnny Pomps and other IRISH MOB SOLDIERS, all wearing dark suits, all crouching at the end of the bar. One of them taps Pomps, points at Mite.

JOHNNY POMPS

Fuckin' parasite! The balls on you,
come waltzing in here!

MITE

I ain't here to talk to you, me and
my partner got business with the
Skipper!

JOHNNY POMPS

500 c's for those French pornos or
I'm gonna tear you apart!

MITE

I don't have it, too bad for you.
So you can go fuck yourself.

Johnny Pomps backhands Mite, knocking him to the floor.

MITE (CONT'D)

Mac! Now! NOW!

Kockroach doesn't understand what's happening.
He just stands staring at Johnny Pomps, a smile plastered
across his face.

KOCKROACH

Bubbelah!

Johnny Pomps leans over Mite, now curled up like a bug on the
floor. He slaps Mite, over and over again. It's brutal.

MITE

Mac! MAC!

On the verge of losing consciousness, Mite looks up to see
Johnny Pomps towering over him. Spittle dripping from his
mouth. Pomps cocks his huge fist to smash Mite's skull.

Mite closes his eyes. This is the end.
But nothing happens. Mite opens his eyes.

Kockroach is holding Johnny Pomps - a massive man, easily 250
pounds - up in the air by his arm.
Holding him high, like Johnny Pomps is nothing but a doll.

KOCKROACH

What are you queer or somethin'?

K. tightens his grip. There's an audible CRACK, as the bones in Johnny Poms's arms are crushed.

Poms SCREAMS. A grown man, now whimpering like a child.

Then K., with his cockroach strength, spins Johnny Poms, like a shot put - and releases him.

Johnny Poms slams into the wall, his body cracking the wood paneling with a THUD. He flops to the floor, unconscious.

Absolute silence. Every mobster in the pub is staring at K. Then, as if it was ordered by the Skipper himself - they rush toward K.

K. - his pure animal survival instincts kicking in - behaves precisely like a cockroach in battle: he stilt-stands to elevate his body and neck, bats away running men and knives, bites the neck of others, before sending them careening onto the floor or into a wall, knocking them unconscious. It's sloppy and spastic and all at once, it's over.

K. stands, not even breathing heavily, surrounded by six mobsters on the floor, some unconscious, some MOANING.

K. spots his fallen cigarette. He bends down and pops it in his mouth, savoring the fire in his throat.

KOCKROACH (CONT'D)

You look after Mite. He's a friend of mine.

On the other side of the room, Skipper whispers to his consigliere, Punchy, who whispers to Mite.

MITE

Mac, come over here, would you? The Skipper wants to say hello.

Mite gestures at the musicians.

MITE (CONT'D)

Music for the Skipper!

The band starts back up, and the restaurant returns to normal, like nothing happened.

SKIPPER

Is he Irish?

MITE

Irish as they come.

SKIPPER

What's his last name?

Mite hesitates, he has no idea. Then he spies the beer tap handles behind the bar: MacKeson, Guinness, Burke, Smithwick.

MITE

Mac. Mac. Guinness. Mac
MacGuinness.

Skipper gestures at a chair.

SKIPPER

Mr. MacGuinness. Let's talk
rainbows and sunshine.

EXT. BECKETT'S PUB. NIGHT.

Mite and Kockroach stumble into the street, Mite so excited, K. has to jog to keep up.

MITE

You were beautiful! And what I did
back there? Classic chess move. I
sacrificed the pawn! Me! You play
the Game of Kings?

KOCKROACH

Kings.

MITE

That's what we're gonna be! You and
me. Just you wait.

From the dark of door-well, a lighter SPARKS, illuminating a big man in a rumpled suit: Detective Fallon, the cop from the tabloids, his fedora pulled tight..

FALLON

Who's the sourpuss?

Mite stares, but says nothing.

FALLON (CONT'D)

Pow Wow with the Skipper himself,
huh? Moving up in the world. What
were you jawing about?

MITE

I'm retired from snitching, Fallon.

FALLON

I'm not looking for anything on the Skipper. Nothing mob-related.

He lights another cigarette. Hands it to Mite.

FALLON (CONT'D)

You know the Square better than anybody. I'm asking, man to man.

Fallon picks tobacco out of his teeth.

FALLON (CONT'D)

Killer ate John Doe's face. Ripped the door clean off its hinges. I like him for a circus freak maybe.

Mite glances at K., who smiles back, innocent.

MITE

I ain't heard nothin' about no circus freaks. On the level. Now can we go?

Fallon smiles, warm and avuncular.

FALLON

Yeah, sure, you can go. But if you hear something. You know where to find me.

Fallon winks at the smiling K.

FALLON (CONT'D)

Nice teeth, pal. Keep'em clean.

KOCKROACH

Rain's comin', nothin' you can do.

Fallon pauses, looks up at the sky, confused.

INT. AUTOMAT. TIMES SQUARE. NIGHT.

Mite slides in a booth, next to Alice, and K. follows. All three now squashed tightly onto one side.

MITE

What're ya doin'? Sit over there.

Mite points and K. moves to sit across, on the other side.

MITE (CONT'D)

We had the night! Alice, meet my
new friend, Mac.

She reaches out her hand.

ALICE

Hello.

K. doesn't shake her hand.

KOCKROACH

Whaddy gonna do.

MITE

Alice here teaches kiddies to read
and do their arithmetic. Comes out
to the Automat to see how the
rebels and beatniks live, ain't
that right, dollface?

He winks at Alice.

MITE (CONT'D)

Keep an eye on him, gonna grab us
some Blue Plates!

He jumps up to get food.

ALICE

Mite thinks I'm some kind of nun.
It's sweet.

K. stares at Alice. Utterly still. He sniffs the air - a
female! He's immediately attracted to her.

ALICE (CONT'D)

But he's right that I come here for
the flash. I'm working on a novel.
This city, right now - it's Paris
in the '20s. One of those electric
moments that people will be writing
about years from now.

K. lurches forward, an inch from her face, breathing in
deeply. Then he leans down, and nibbles on her fingers,
resting on the table.

There's something so audacious in this, both animalistic and
innocent. Alice can't help but laugh.

K. flaps his arm, rapidly. Like a bird's wings. (Or a
cockroach that wishes to mate).

Alice stares, frozen.

So K. now pulls at his shirt, exposing his abdomen.

Still nothing from Alice.

So K. removes his lighter and flicks it on.

Assuming he's inviting her to smoke, Alice removes a cigarette, lights it on his flame, and blows out the lighter.

K. makes a strange BUZZING sound, deep and guttural. He flicks the lighter, on and off, and waves it in front of her face, back and forth.

Alice has no idea what he's doing. But she's riveted.

Mite drops tapioca pudding and an apple on the table.

K. grabs the apple, and like a squirrel, spins it, fast, barely taking time to swallow, as he rips at it.

ALICE (CONT'D)

Your friend. Is a strange man.

K. slurps the tapioca pudding, sucking it up in one gulp.

MITE

He's my ticket to the big time.
Needs refining, guidance, sure, but
who don't? That's where I come in,
see? Me and him together, no
tellin' what we can't do.

K. licks his lips, over and over, staring intently at Alice.

KOCKROACH

Looking for a date? Who ain't?
It'll cost you five. Want to have
some fun? You look like you could
use it. Girls, girls, girls.

ALICE

Did you just proposition me?

MITE

What? No. No, he's a beat. It's
like he talks in poetry, you know.

Alice is unnerved. There's something about K.; something innocent, strange and dangerous all at once. It disturbs and excites her. Flummoxed, she gathers her papers and stands. It's only now that the metal Polio brace on her right leg is visible.

ALICE

I have to. Be up. Early, for
school. Tomorrow. Morning.

MITE

Sure thing, dollface.

Mite gives her a kiss on the cheek, and she returns it,
awkward and chaste.

ALICE

Nice to meet you, Mac.

KOCKROACH

Sure thing, dollface.

She blinks. Then turns, walking away with a noticeable limp.

K. stares, her walk oddly similar to his own. He watches with
visible hunger. He recalls mating. And misses it.

MITE

Hey. Hey!

K. turns to look at Mite.

MITE (CONT'D)

You don't ever stare at her like
that! Alice's gonna be my girl.
What, you want a bunny?

K. catches a last glimpse at Alice as she exits the Automat,
walking past SYLVIE, a peroxide-blond prostitute, cigarette
hanging from her red lips, on her way in.

KOCKROACH

Bunny.

Mite looks over to see Sylvie. He laughs.

MITE

Sweet pea. Mite's gonna get you
everything you ever wanted.

INT. SYLVIE'S APARTMENT. NIGHT.

Mite is splayed out on a bean bag, cradling a half-empty
bottle, so blotto that his heavy lids flutter closed.

To the sultry sounds of Thelonious Monk's *'Round Midnight*,
Sylvie teaches K. how to dance.

DAVID ATTENBOROUGH (V.O.)
 The mating ritual of the cockroach
 is generally initiated by the
 female, who raises her wings and
 secretes Gentisyl Quinone
 Isovalerate, a powerful pheromone
 from the exocrine membranes along
 her back.

Sylvie turns her back, looks over her shoulder at K., and
 undulates her ass.

DAVID ATTENBOROUGH (V.O.)
 Sensors in the male antennae pick
 up the sweet pheromonal scent and
 direct the male to the ready
 female.

K. reaches out an arm, like an antenna, and strokes Sylvie's
 head.

Sylvie giggles and mimics K., stroking K.'s head.

K. HUMS/SINGS. It's strange, shrill, HIGH-PITCHED.

DAVID ATTENBOROUGH (V.O.)
 This release of pheromone can be
 accompanied by stridulatory singing
 or hissing by one or both sexes.

K. takes her into his arms with great ferocity: Sylvie's face
 a state of bliss.

INT. 21 CLUB RESTAURANT. NIGHT.

Dodging the feet of waiters, a COCKROACH scampers along the
 tile of the 21 Club, pausing on a discarded matchbook - the
 '21 Club' in bright red letters - only to be SQUASHED seconds
 later by the shoe of a WAITER, who continues on, not having
 even seen the poor creature.

Chyron: 1965. Eight Years Later.

WAITERS circle, balancing martinis and lobsters on trays,
 laughter and thick cigarette smoke fills the room.

The '21 Club is the place to be: MEN in grey suits, WOMEN in
 pearls, mink stoles, and highballs; ACTORS and WRITERS and
 THEATRE PRODUCERS; COLUMNISTS with phones at their booths;
 GANGSTERS with their MOLLS; MOGULS and POLITICIANS with their
 second WIVES or GIRLFRIENDS.

Alice, now stylishly dressed, sits next to Mite, in his private corner booth; he wears an iridescent green suit, sips his Martini, and sows at his thick steak.

A sad-sack of a man, COONEY, his hat in his hands, appears in front of their table.

COONEY

Truly sorry to disturb your dinner,
Mr. Mulligan, I'm late with my
payments this -

Mite raises a hand to silence him.

COONEY (CONT'D)

Please. I've come to you first
because you're reasonable. I have
three children.

MITE

Do your explaining to Mac.

Cooney's face drains of blood. Then he quickly removes the ring on his finger, handing it over, his shame so strong that he can't even look Mite in the eyes.

COONEY

This was my great-grandfather's.

Mite examines the ring. Nods. Back at Cooney.

MITE

We're good here. See you next week.

Cooney nods, and slinks away, a broken man.

Mite swallows. Like Cooney, all he feels is shame.

ALICE

That was exhilarating. Like out of
a movie.

Mite is quiet for a moment. A confession.

MITE

All my life. People act like I got
some disease. Call me parasite.
What's that but someone got to
fight for his dinner? Nobody never
just handed me a seat at the table.

ALICE

You don't think I know what it is
to be unwelcome?

MITE

We got that in common.

He looks around the room.

MITE (CONT'D)

But don't matter in here. What people think I am. What color you are. You know why?

She shakes her head no.

MITE (CONT'D)

If you got the dough. You're welcome everywhere.

ALICE

How do you break someone's leg? Do you have to use tools? Do they actually crack? I mean, I know they call Mac a leg-breaker, correct?

At the mention of his name, Mite checks his watch: 9 p.m. He signals to the MAITRE'D, who rushes over with a RED phone, plugs it in by Mite's table; he also leaves a thick envelope tucked under the phone.

MITE

It's just... an expression.

Mite places the envelope in his suit pocket, picks up the receiver, dials. A voice says, "Plaza Hotel."

MITE (CONT'D)

(into phone)

9 p.m. wake up reminder to ring Mr. MacGuinness's room, send up his breakfast.

ALICE

I've only met him the one time.

MITE

He's hard-boiled. I don't want you to get hurt.

(into the phone)

Okay, thanks, Joe.

Mite hangs up the phone.

ALICE

So Mac's never broken anyone's leg?

MITE
Whaddya want me to say here?

ALICE
The truth.

MITE
Couple arms I know for sure.

ALICE
What's it like to watch him do it?
Do you see bones stick out? Do they
apologize...or beg? Do people pee
themselves?

MITE
No. What? No. You don't want to
know.

ALICE
I want to know. Every detail. The
sounds. The smells.

MITE
This is a disturbing turn of
events here. You like this?

ALICE
Tell me the dark parts.

Mite sighs.

MITE
Business deals. Some chump
flimflams us, we can't sing to the
coppers, we take care of it
ourselves. That's it.

ALICE
That's not it.

Mite glances around the room.

MITE
I don't understand. You like this?

Alice nods.

MITE (CONT'D)
Loan-sharking. Ladies of the Night.
Dope. Heists. Murders. It's
everything.

ALICE
Do you hear the crack?

Mite stares.

MITE
You hear pleading. Little shake in
their voice. Then screams. A lot of
screaming. It's shameful.

But not to Alice, whose eyes burn with excitement.
She lights a cigarette, as waiters clear their plates.

MITE (CONT'D)
Two ways this ends. I'm bumped. Or
end up in the Big House.

He looks into her eyes.

MITE (CONT'D)
I want to tell you something. My
dream. Don't laugh.

Alice nods.

MITE (CONT'D)
No, you got to say the words.

ALICE
I will not laugh.

Mite pauses.

MITE
You and me. We got a house.
Somewhere pretty. Far away from
here. White picket fence. Sounds
like a painting, I know. But that's
it. White picket fence.

Alice smiles, happy and sad.

ALICE
That's a nice dream, Mite.

She stares. The message clear. It's not her dream.

MITE
I'll come back after. We'll dance.

He leans to kiss Alice on the cheek - but she shifts her
face, presenting her lips. Mite twitches, a strange tweaky
moment, and pulls away. He quickly pecks her cheek.

ALICE
You have never kissed me.

MITE
That was a kiss.

ALICE
A real kiss.

Mite is contrite.

ALICE (CONT'D)
How long we been doing this? The expensive clothes you buy me. Take me to clubs, show me off in your private booth. We have some laughs.

MITE
I'm gonna make an honest woman of you one day, I promise.

ALICE
But you don't ask if I ever see anyone else. And you never touch me. Or try to.

Mite is red-faced; he has no answer for this.

MITE
I gotta go. The Boss. But we'll dance after, yeah?

Alice nods, then watches as Mite weaves through the crowd.

INT. PLAZA HOTEL SUITE. NIGHT.

The SOUND of KNOCKING. THREE WOMEN, completely naked, sleep in a king-sized bed, tangled up in the sheets, so deeply exhausted that they don't stir at the knocks.

A SHUFFLING noise. Out from under the bed Kockroach emerges. He's naked, muscular and lithe, untouched by time or age.

DAVID ATTENBOROUGH (V.O.)
The cockroach does not dream. The inner mechanisms of their brains do not trouble with working though the unsolved dilemmas of the day. A cockroach has no unsolved dilemmas. A cockroach does what it needs to get what it wants - and moves on.

K. puts sunglasses on his face, lights a cigarette, strolls to the door, his walk a normal gait now, his former perpetual warning smile also gone.

Mite squints into the dark room, seeing the naked women in K.'s bed.

MITE

Dishy pins should do you for a spell.

KOCKROACH

I am never satisfied.

MITE

Come on, you serious?

KOCKROACH

I am hungry all the time.

MITE

That's the saddest thing I ever heard.

KOCKROACH

We cannot escape our nature.

K. CLAPS his hands until the women stir, blinking awake. They know the drill; they wrap themselves in sheets or robes and leave as quickly as possible.

K. flops on the couch, gestures for Mite to give him the daily update.

MITE

Mind if I turn on a light?

K. shakes his head yes. He does mind. Mite swallows.

MITE (CONT'D)

Okay, so. Protection's clockwork. No worries there after what you did to that Georgios piece of shit. The others holding back all fell in line like tenpins.

FLASHBACK - a moment of extreme violence in the Acropolis, a Greek restaurant, where K. is slamming GEORGIOS' head into a bowl of Calamari, over and over again.

MITE (CONT'D)

Girls all on the job. Not Sylvie, she's on the sleeve, I'm thinkin'.

(MORE)

MITE (CONT'D)

Everybody knows not to sell to our girls, no clue where she's getting it.

K. nods for Mite to continue.

MITE (CONT'D)

Joy-girl houses all paid, ponies hot, this week's collections all on target - we're fat city.

Mite opens a large envelope, stuffed with cash, flipping through the bills for K. to see.

MITE (CONT'D)

Last thing. The Skipper wants everyone to meet at midnight. Punchy said make sure to be on time.

Mite nods, turns to leave.

KOCKROACH

Aren't you forgetting something?

Mite turns, K. smiling his old grimace-smile.

INT. PLAZA HOTEL SUITE. NIGHT.

An enormous platter of boiled lobster and shrimp has been ordered; K. slurps shrimp after shrimp, as they play.

MITE

She taught me everything I know, Sister Christine. Always said, chess teaches you to think ahead.

KOCKROACH

I didn't know there was a future until I met you.

MITE

You didn't know a lot of things. But you're getting better at chess.

He points to K.'s bishop. Then at K.'s Knight.

MITE (CONT'D)

Got me pinned here. Got me pinned there. I'm in serious trouble, Boss.

KOCKROACH
It would appear so.

Mite smiles. Then he moves a pawn.

MITE
But appearances. That's the trick.

Mite points to a pawn.

MITE (CONT'D)
Check. By the pawn. And checkmate
in two.

Mite offers his hand to shake, and K. takes it.

MITE (CONT'D)
Good game, Boss.

DAVID ATTENBOROUGH (V.O.)
Cockroaches have no understanding
of the concept of a future. In the
first chess games, if a piece could
be killed, this cockroach killed
it. But every game ended with Mite
eating his all-important Boss
piece. Through the practice of the
ritual, the ever-unraveling
possibilities of the future - like
the wings of a chitlin - have begun
to open up for this cockroach.

MITE
Won't be long afore you own me.

K. keeps shaking Mite's hand, tightening his grip until Mite
winces.

KOCKROACH
I own you already, Mite.

K. releases Mite's hand.
Mite stares at K.'s impassive face, the sunglasses hiding his
eyes.

INT. LIMOUSINE. NIGHT.

Mite and K. step into K.'s brown limousine. Brown like a bug.

KOCKROACH
How's the wife, Jong-Soo?

K.'s Korean driver, JONG-SOO, shrugs.

JONG-SOO
She's a whore.

KOCKROACH
Lucky you.

MITE
Beckett's.

KOCKROACH
No. The Seton.

Jong-Soo nods at K. and pulls out into traffic.

MITE
What? No, I told you, Sylvie's too
sick to work. And Punchy said not
to be late.

K. lights a cigarette. Humans taught him there is power in
silence. So he says nothing.

EXT. WAREHOUSES. NIGHT.

The limo travels through dark, cobblestoned streets, shadows
of warehouses rising out of the fog.

INT. LIMO. NIGHT.

In the backseat, between K. and Mite, sits Sylvie.
Her skin deathly pale, her head swaying, slurring her words.

SYLVIE
We goin' dancing, lover boy? I was
the one who taught you how to
dance, you remember that?

Sylvie appeals to Mite, who is visibly uncomfortable.

SYLVIE (CONT'D)
You remember, Mite. That was the
night the Skipper made you. I was
Mac's reward.

MITE
I remember, Sylvie.

Her head swivels back to K.

SYLVIE
It was never about the money with
you. I was your girl.

Sylvie starts crying. Then laughing. Then crying some more.

SYLVIE (CONT'D)

I'm no good for anything any more.

Jong-Soo makes a turn. Thick fog drifts over a desolate pier and the car slows to a halt. Sylvie finally understands where they are.

SYLVIE (CONT'D)

No, no. Mite. No. Please? Say something. Please!

Mite looks away, ashamed.

EXT. WESTSIDE PIERS. NIGHT.

Jong-Soo opens the door and drags Sylvie out of the car.

SYLVIE

I'm no pier monkey! I was your girl! Mac! I loved you!

Jong-Soo dumps Sylvie, deep in the shifting banks of fog - legs splayed, stockings torn. She starts weeping.

INT. LIMO. NIGHT.

K. nods at Mite.

KOCKROACH

Roll down your window.

Mite obeys, revealing Sylvie on the cold pavement outside.

KOCKROACH (CONT'D)

Something for you, Sylvie. Help you get back to work.

Mite eyes a brown paper bindle of heroin - with a RED STRING seal - before K. flips it out the window.

SYLVIE

You dirty cockroach!

As Jong-Soo drives off, Mite looks out the back window. Sylvie is already shooting up.

KOCKROACH

Sylvie is the only one who sees me for what I am. I always enjoyed that about her.

INT. BECKETT'S PUB. NIGHT.

K. and Mite stride through the restaurant, swing past the bustling kitchen, and...

INT. BACK ROOM. BECKETT'S PUB. NIGHT

Into a smoke-filled private room with its own bar, and two ancient BARMEN behind it.

Skipper - surrounded by Punchy and his SIX TOP LIEUTENANTS, all smoking, stop talking as soon as they see Mite and K.

PUNCHY
You're late. Sit!

K. sits next to the Skipper, as the Barmen fill the shot glass in front of each man.

PUNCHY (CONT'D)
The Skipper wanted you all here
because a decision has been made.
We're going to war.

He raises his glass.

PUNCHY (CONT'D)
Sláinte.

A stunned silence. Then all throw back their shots.

MITE
Who with? The Yids? The I-talians?

Skipper shakes his head.

SKIPPER
Moonstone and his Negro army.

MITE
But we made a pact with Tartelli
and Zwillman.

SKIPPER
But now. I want the whole city.

MITE
We attack Harlem and the South
Bronx, Yids and Wops, they won't
back us.

Skipper puffs on his cigar. He pauses.

SKIPPER

I got an arsenal coming in from Korea. Black market from an army base. Soon as the shipment arrives, we hit Moonstone. Meantime, play nice with the Jews and our Italian friends. That clear? Mac?

KOCKROACH

Sure. No knishes. No calzones.

K. stands, stretches. Starts to walk out.

SKIPPER

Did I say we was done?

K. pauses. Silence. Not a single man dares breathe.

SKIPPER (CONT'D)

Anyone else hear me say that we was done. I say that?

Every man in the place mumbles, "no."

SKIPPER (CONT'D)

MacGuinness? You hear me say that? Is that what I said?

KOCKROACH

Collection ain't gonna just jump into my pockets like little fishies.

And with that, K. walks out.

Mite sneaks a glance at the Skipper, acknowledging the clear disrespect.

The Skipper nods, and all the men, apart from Mite, file out.

Skipper pours Mite a shot of whiskey.

SKIPPER

Only one man won't let you look him in the eyes.

They clink glasses, throw back the shot.

SKIPPER (CONT'D)

Maybe not today. Or tomorrow. But soon. MacGuinness is gonna stick me. Try to be the Skipper himself.

MITE

He's your best earner. Always been loyal. I don't see it.

SKIPPER

You know why he wears dark glasses?

MITE

Sensitive eyes?

SKIPPER

So we can't see into his soul. But when I shake his hand, I *feel* it. That's my talent. His soul is cold and ruthless. Dark. Small.

Mite nods, this feels accurate.
He downs another shot and pours one for the Skipper.

SKIPPER (CONT'D)

You saw it today. He's already planning something. I'm never wrong. Bring me proof.

From his suit pocket, the Skipper removes a LEMON.
Places it on the table in front of Mite.

SKIPPER (CONT'D)

And this will be yours.

Mite is visibly confused.

MITE

This lemon here?

SKIPPER

What? No! No. Not this lemon here. Acres and acres of lemons. I bought groves in California. You're gonna run 'em.

The Skipper smiles. It's unnerving.

SKIPPER (CONT'D)

I know your secret, Mite. Yes, I do.

Suddenly, Mite can't breathe. A interminable pause.

MITE

Yeah?

The Skipper nods.

SKIPPER

Yeah.

Mite is afraid even to move. Skipper, too, is silent for far too long.

SKIPPER (CONT'D)

You want out. Don't you? Little quiet? You want out to settle down with your colored lady friend. No more fuss? Am I right?

Tremendous relief finally coursing through him, Mite nods.

MITE

There's money in lemons?

SKIPPER

Just like collections. But from a tree. Set you up. For life.

Mite smells the lemon.

EXT. BECKETT'S PUB. NIGHT.

Mite exits Beckett's, the lemon in his hand. Smells it again.

INT. LIMOUSINE. NIGHT.

Across the street, hidden in the dark of his limo, K. watches Mite head up the street.

JONG-SOO

Should I follow?

KOCKROACH

He's just playing chess. Take me to my new home.

EXT. WAREHOUSE. RED HOOK WATERFRONT. NIGHT.

Along the Red Hook waterfront, the limo pulls in front of a dilapidated, abandoned warehouse, half-hidden in thick fog. K. exits the limo, a loaf of bread in his hands.

INT. WAREHOUSE. RED HOOK WATERFRONT. NIGHT.

K. - stone still, waiting - perches on the rotting wood floor of the warehouse, the loaf of bread in his lap.

Slowly, a BLACK MASS emerges from every crack in every floorboard, from the walls, the ceiling. COCKROACHES. Thousands of them. They swarm, like water, a teaming mass - engulfing K., crawling over his entire body.

Peeking through the shimmering black - K. smiles. He's with his colony - feeding them - and he feels safe.

A CREAK of an ancient floor board. From downstairs:

JACKIE MOONSTONE (O.S.)
MacGuinness!

K. makes a HUMMING noise, warm and soothing, and the cockroaches, all over him like a living skin, instantly swarm back into invisible cracks in the floor, the walls, the ceiling.

INT. WAREHOUSE. RED HOOK WATERFRONT. NIGHT.

K., now at the top of a staircase, is illuminated by a single flashlight beam.

KOCKROACH
Hello, Jackie.

JACKIE MOONSTONE, the Boss of Harlem, an older black man in a velvet Fedora, leans on a pearl-handled cane, pointing the flashlight beam at K.

KOCKROACH (CONT'D)
Do you like my new house?

Jackie eyes the rotting walls, the broken stairs, the stained and peeling ceiling leaking water everywhere.

JACKIE MOONSTONE
What's the Skipper planning?

INT. LIMOUSINE. NIGHT.

K. sits alone in his limousine, smoking. Something tickles his wrist: a cockroach crawls from his sleeve onto his hand. He lets it dance across his fingers.

Alice, wearing a bathrobe, slides in next to him, and K. shuffles his little cockroach friend back under his sleeve.

ALICE
You always wake people up at two o'clock in the morning?!

KOCKROACH
What does Mite want?

Alice pauses.

ALICE
From whom? From me?

KOCKROACH
From life.

She stares, instantly less angry. He's almost tender. She sighs.

ALICE
A house with a white picket fence.

KOCKROACH
I know of such a house. I will get it for him. Thank you.

The point of the conversation achieved, K. looks away.

ALICE
You wake me up in the middle of the night to ask me that?

K. nods. Nonplussed, she opens the car door, then turns back.

ALICE (CONT'D)
When we first met? You and Mite came to the Automat to celebrate, why did you keep flicking your lighter at me?

KOCKROACH
To impress you. With the fire.

ALICE
Why?

KOCKROACH
Because I wanted to mate with you.

Alice stares, shocked by his directness.

ALICE
Show me your eyes.

K. removes his glasses: he has beautiful, almost glowing green eyes.

Unable to stop herself, she reaches out and strokes K's face.

ALICE (CONT'D)
You are so beautiful.

KOCKROACH
And you are a beautiful human.

Alice laughs. And only stops as K. rubs his arm against hers, sawing back and forth, like two antennae touching.

He gathers her into his arms and kisses her.

ALICE
You don't mind this?

He glances down at her polio brace. He shakes his head no.

KOCKROACH
I miss having armor.

She looks at him: he's so odd: but this all feels so good. She grabs his face and starts kissing him.

INT. PLAZA HOTEL SUITE. MORNING.

K. dresses, all the while staring at Alice, naked, wrapped up in the sheets in his hotel suite bed.

EXT. YONKERS. NIGHT.

K.'s limo pulls in front of a lovely middle-class house with a white picket fence. The porch bulb the only visible light.

INT. BEDROOM. NIGHT.

In the dark - K. watches a man and woman sleep, curled up.

The man shifts, it's Cooney. His eyes open and K. immediately places his hand over Cooney's mouth.

Cooney stares at K. The sunglasses, his grimace-smile, and in Cooney's eyes, there is the most profound look of terror.

KOCKROACH
Hello, Cooney.

INT. BECKETT'S PUB. NIGHT.

Inside Beckett's Pub, it's pitch black, no people, no lights.

K. moves in the absolute black through the pub, past the restaurant, and into the Skipper's private back office.

INT. SKIPPER'S BACK OFFICE. BECKETT'S PUB. NIGHT.

K. opens a few cabinets, shuffling through papers, but everything is out in the open, for all to see.

He spots a few books on a shelf. "Ulysses" by James Joyce, The Bible, "Why I Am Not a Christian and Other Essays on Religion and Related Subjects," by Bertrand Russell.

He opens one, flips through the pages. Nothing.

And another book, a thick tome - "California Gardens." He opens it. Inside - the entire center of the book has been carved out.

K. pulls out a folded stack of PAPERS, all with numbers and words, none of which mean anything to K.

INT. PLAZA HOTEL SUITE. MORNING.

K. crawls out from under the hotel suite bed, holding a cigar box. He opens it, and shakes Alice awake.

ALICE

Kiss me.

K. leans into her, kisses her with great force.

KOCKROACH

I found these at the Skipper's lair. They are secrets to him.

Alice scans the papers - ledgers of some sort.

KOCKROACH (CONT'D)

I need to know what the squiggles mean.

ALICE

The squiggles?

K. points to the words on the papers.

ALICE (CONT'D)

The words?

K. nods.

ALICE (CONT'D)
Are you saying...?

KOCKROACH
I need you to say the words. So I
know what they mean. Then you can
teach me.

She pauses.

ALICE
You poor dear, you can't read?

K. shakes his head no.

KOCKROACH
When I was young. I was separated
from my colony. I was left to
scuttle on my own.

This melts Alice's heart; she pulls K. into a tight embrace.

INT. BECKETT'S PUB. NIGHT.

Skipper, Punchy ever-present behind him, yanks Mite's ear and
slams his head into the table.

SKIPPER
I can't risk war without proof that
MacGuinness is gonna stab me!
Sitting with our thumbs up our ass!

Mite sits up, blinking, his nose bleeding.

MITE
I'm lookin'. I got nothin'.

Skipper inhales on his cigar.

SKIPPER
The shipment's been here for days.
You want out? You bring me proof.

He places a lemon on the table. Red blood rivulets fall from
Mite's face onto the white tablecloth, next to the lemon.

Mite blinks, his mind racing.

EXT. WESTSIDE PIERS. NIGHT.

The fog so thick that it's impossible to see five feet ahead - Mite, tissue stuck in his nose, drifts past PROSTITUTES and JOHNS prowling in the shadows of the pier.

Sylvie, teetering on heels, stumbles from the fog. Bone skinny, shivering and sweating, blouse torn.

MITE

You're lookin' dish, Sylvie.

She cackles; Mite lights a cigarette for her, her hand shaking badly.

MITE (CONT'D)

Show me the rat powder you take.

She winces, embarrassed, then removes a bindle of heroin, the RED STRING tied around its base.

MITE (CONT'D)

Where'd you get this?

Sylvie inhales, suddenly looking terrified.

SYLVIE

I can't do 'nother week on the piers.

Mite pauses. Nods. She's barely holding on. He opens his wallet, hands her a wad of cash.

MITE

You told me once you got a sister in Pittsburgh, yeah?

MITE (CONT'D)

You go to the bus station. Right now. You don't do nothin' else. You go to your sister's. Only that. You understand?

She looks at the wad, then at Mite, confused.

SYLVIE

This is what Mac wants?

MITE

This is what Mac wants. He told me to tell you. To do that.

Sylvie nods, tearing up, wanting to believe him.

SYLVIE

I knew he wouldn't forget me. I was
his number one girl. Number one.

MITE

You were. You still are.

EXT. TERMINAL BAR. NIGHT.

A torrential downpour hammers the street outside the Terminal Bar, a dingy watering hole in a bad part of town.

A lighter FLARES - illuminating the red face of Detective Fallon, sheltered from the rain, hiding in the shadows.

Mite joins him under the dripping canopy, surveying the street.

MITE

Let's flap our gums.

FALLON

I'm hearing things. Wars brewing.

Mite holds out his palm: the bindle of red-thread heroin.

MITE

The red string. Whose brand?

Fallon glances down.

FALLON

One of your girls give you that?

MITE

Whose brand?

FALLON

The one with the bum leg?

MITE

Alice's a school teacher. She's
civilian. Pure. Don't ever involve
her in my business.

Fallon inhales deeply. Blows smoke in Mite's face.

FALLON

Not as pure as you think.

MITE

What's that supposed to mean?

FALLON
Give me something on MacGuinness.
Maybe we can talk red strings.

EXT. OTHER SIDE OF THE STREET. TERMINAL BAR. NIGHT.

Hidden in the rain, K. watches Fallon and Mite from the comfort of his limo.

DAVID ATTENBOROUGH (V.O.)
Just as this cockroach has no understanding of love, he has no understanding of hate. The only emotions he understands are greed. And fear. Greed drives every cockroach forward toward the wet slop of goop upon which it feasts. But fear is why cockroaches sleep in the tightest places, why they are silent, why they scurry in darkness.

Mite turns his collar up, hustles down the street.

The limo trails him for a moment, then pulls alongside. Mite freezes, caught.

K. rolls down the window.

KOCKROACH
Hello, Mite.

INT. LIMOUSINE. NIGHT.

A heavy silence as the limo dodges cars up the Westside Highway. Mite stares out at the freezing Hudson River, the rain peppering its grey surface.

KOCKROACH
You want to tell me why you're meeting Fallon?

MITE
Does it matter now?

He turns on K.

MITE (CONT'D)
The red string! That Jackie Moonstone puts around his Horse.
(MORE)

MITE (CONT'D)

Because somebody's bringing it into our territory, where it shouldn't be! You didn't notice the red string, did you? Small detail. That ties you directly to Moonstone!

KOCKROACH

Have you told the Skipper?

Mite shakes his head no. He stares back out the window.

MITE

And I won't be now. When you do it, do it fast, Boss. No pain.

He turns to look back at K.

MITE (CONT'D)

Promise me this - you'll look after Alice. She's special. I wanted to do right by her one day.

He takes out a tiny box from his pocket. Stares at the diamond engagement ring inside.

EXT. WESTSIDE HIGHWAY. NIGHT.

Under the George Washington Bridge, lit up at night, the limo flies by a sign: Yonkers.

EXT. YONKERS. NIGHT.

The limousine pulls in front of Cooney's house, with its white picket fence. Mite stares.

MITE

This is Cooney's place.

KOCKROACH

It has a white picket fence.

MITE

You're gonna kill me at Cooney's?

KOCKROACH

This house has a white picket fence.

Mite looks back out at the house.

MITE

I don't. Understand what's happening. You're *not* killin' me?

KOCKROACH

Cooney paid off his debt with the deed. The house is yours. It has a white picket fence.

MITE

What?! Why are you doing this? I was going to sell you down the river! For lemon groves! I don't understand. I don't understand.

Kockroach does a perfect vocal imitation of Murray.

KOCKROACH

You look after Mite. He's a friend of mine.

Mite laughs. Incredulous.

MITE

This is really for me?

KOCKROACH

This is really for you.

MITE

What do you want?

KOCKROACH

The loyalty of a brother.

Mite exhales, suddenly touched. He actually tears up.

MITE

I never had no brother.

KOCKROACH

I've had hundreds.

Mite stares.

MITE

What's it mean? If I'm your brother?

KOCKROACH

It means I won't eat you. Unless I have to.

INT. PLAZA HOTEL SUITE. MORNING.

Alice and K. sit in front of an enormous breakfast spread. She's holding Dr. Seuss's 'Green Eggs and Ham' and points to each word as she reads.

ALICE

"And I will eat them in a house.
And I will eat them with a mouse.
And I will eat them here and there.
Say! I will eat them anywhere! I do
so like Green Eggs and Ham! Thank
you, thank you, Sam I am!"

K. points to some words, reading. Slowly.

KOCKROACH

"Thank. You. Thank. You. Sam. I
am!"

EXT. WAREHOUSE. RED HOOK WATERFRONT. NIGHT.

Thick clouds of fog surround K.'s limousine as it pulls in front of his abandoned warehouse.

He and Mite exit the car, and K. puts a finger to his lips. Shhhhhh.

EXT. WAREHOUSE. RED HOOK WATERFRONT. NIGHT.

On the second floor of K.'s warehouse, windows overlooking the East River and the lights of Lower Manhattan, K. swings an axe, CRACKING open a pinewood US Army crate.

Mite takes in the haul: dozens of open, plain pinewood US Army crates before him, all filled with military machine guns, grenades, flame-throwers, mortars, and mortar shells.

MITE

How'd you figure where the Skipper
is hiding all this?

KOCKROACH

There were words. On the papers.

MITE

You don't think he'll notice
they're gone?

KOCKROACH

You think you're the only one who
works for me?

Mite picks up a flame-thrower.

KOCKROACH (CONT'D)

Tomorrow midnight, Moonstone and I
will move the arsenal up to Harlem.
To prepare our trap.

MITE

You draw Skipper out. He attacks.

KOCKROACH

We're surprised. All is lost. But
then, at the last second...

MITE

You use his own superior firepower
against him.

KOCKROACH

We use the Pawn. And become King.

MITE

'And the seventh angel poured out
his vial into the air; and there
came a great voice of the temple of
heaven, from the throne, saying,
"It is done."' Armageddon.

Mite reaches down, holds a hand grenade.

MITE (CONT'D)

It will be a bloodbath.

K. stares.

MITE (CONT'D)

I don't understand. We started with
nothing. Now we have everything!
Women, money, power. We're kings.
What's the point of having all
this? What more can you possibly
want?!

K. blinks. Staring at Mite.

DAVID ATTENBOROUGH (V.O.)

This cockroach has learned that all
humans lie. Cats prowl, mice
devour, cockroaches scurry - and
humans lie. But Mite wins at chess,
his maneuvers are full of
surprises, because he always does
the unexpected.

(MORE)

DAVID ATTENBOROUGH (V.O.) (CONT'D)

Here, he has spoken the truth. And thus, this cockroach decides he shall as well.

KOCKROACH

I am not. Entirely human.

Mite laughs. Stares. Laughs again.

KOCKROACH (CONT'D)

You think I am joking.

K. slides up to Mite. Uncomfortably, freakishly close.

KOCKROACH (CONT'D)

Inside. I am a cockroach.

MITE

So's everyone. We're all a bunch of miserable fuckin' cockroaches.

K. shakes his head no.

KOCKROACH

No. A cockroach. Whose memories. My memories. Go back millions of years. When we had the world to ourselves. When I knew what it was to be. My true self. Then. I molted. I became... part human. And now. I'm trapped in this... grotesque... human... shell.

Mite stares, unsure whether to laugh or cry at the utter insanity of what K.'s saying.

KOCKROACH (CONT'D)

But I fight. For I am always hungry. It is my nature. This is what it means to be a cockroach.

Mite swallows. Nods.

MITE

You said we're brothers, right?

Mite puts his hand on K.'s shoulder.

MITE (CONT'D)

Brother to brother. And I say this with love. You need to find a shrink.

KOCKROACH
I could be small again?

MITE
What? No. What? No, it's like, a
figure of speech.

K. nods.

KOCKROACH
I will stay this size. It makes it
harder to be stepped on by humans.

INT. AUTOMAT. NIGHT.

Mite is dodging through the Automat. Tab, the peroxide-blonde hustler, visibly aged by the street, grabs Mite's arm, repeating his constant refrain.

TAB
Mighty Mite, when we going on our
big date?

Mite brushes past Tab, heads to Alice, waiting for him by the window. He slaps down two train-tickets.

MITE
Train leaves at 2 a.m. Two tickets
to Chicago.

ALICE
I heard they might close the
Automat, can you believe that? It's
the end of an era.

MITE
Listen! Mac is bughouse and
everyone's gonna die!

He takes her hands in his.

MITE (CONT'D)
I asked you to come here. To the
Automat. Where we first met and
where we was happiest. To tell you
that I love you.

Mite takes out the ring box, opens it, holding out the small ring. He gets down on one knee.

MITE (CONT'D)
Alice Grant. Will you marry me?

She takes the ring. Stares at it for a moment.
Then places it back in Mite's hands.

MITE (CONT'D)
You don't love me.

ALICE
It's not that. We both love Mac.

MITE
I don't love Mac! Wait... what do
you mean you love Mac?

ALICE
Why'd you think you haven't seen me
around for a while?

Then Mite puts it together. And realizes the truth.

MITE
Oh. No. No. Oh, God. No.

Alice stands up and limps away.

EXT. AUTOMAT. NIGHT.

Mite catches up to her out on the street, neon signs throwing
bright red across both their faces.

MITE
I love you! That's why I asked you
to marry me!

She takes his hands in hers.

ALICE
I know what you are. It doesn't
make me love you any less. But I
want more for my life. Than being
your beard. And I want more for
you, my beautiful Mite.

She places her hand, tenderly, on his face.

ALICE (CONT'D)
We only go around once.

She kisses him on the lips. Slowly. Deeply. Then she's gone.

This time, Mite lets her go.
She has spoken the truth.
And he is devastated.

INT. PLAZA HOTEL SUITE. NIGHT.

Vinyl plays Miles Davis' "Kind of Blue," as Alice and K. dance close. They kiss.

ALICE
Do you love me?

DAVID ATTENBOROUGH (V.O.)
Love is a word this cockroach hears in every song and in many human conversations, but he has no understanding of it. It has something to do with sex, which he understands, but also to do with the smashing of lips, the swelling syrup of music, and the clenching of bodies without the purpose of procreation.

ALICE
Mite asked me to marry him tonight.

KOCKROACH
That's wonderful.

She stops dancing.

ALICE
How can you say that's wonderful?

KOCKROACH
I should say it's terrible?

ALICE
Yes. Yes!

KOCKROACH
It's terrible.

She smiles.

ALICE
There's something else.

She takes his hand.

ALICE (CONT'D)
I'm pregnant.

He drops her hand. Backs up a few steps.

KOCKROACH

You're going to have a nymph? When, now?

ALICE

What? No. In eight months. Like normal.

K. backs away again, this time even farther.

KOCKROACH

In case it comes sooner you better leave right away.

ALICE

What?!

KOCKROACH

Males of my species like to eat their nymphs. They're considered a delicacy. I know humans can't do this and I don't want to upset you.

ALICE

That's not funny! What are you doing?

KOCKROACH

Saying that I will eat your baby.

ALICE

Stop it! This is serious! I've never felt this way for someone before. I love you!

KOCKROACH

Sylvie told me the same thing, but I never bothered to ask her its meaning. Can you explain what 'I love you' means?

ALICE

Sylvie? The prostitute?! Why did she tell you she loves you?

KOCKROACH

She often said it. When we mated. But I prefer mating with you.

Alice, enraged, slaps him violently, over and over again, battering his chest, his face.

ALICE

Who are you?!!

She stumbles back, then rages again, slapping, screaming.

ALICE (CONT'D)
I thought I loved you! But I hate
you!

She bolts for the door, slamming it behind her.

K. stands still, utterly confused. Something precious has
been lost. It's a new feeling.
And not a good one.

INT. SKIPPER'S PRIVATE ROOM. BECKETT'S PUB. NIGHT.

Mite is in the backroom, huddled in the dark with Skipper, a
a half-empty bottle of whiskey between them.
Their faces close. Slurring their words.

SKIPPER
You see now? What he is?

Skipper pours another shot for Mite.
Pokes his finger into Mite's chest.

SKIPPER (CONT'D)
A friend stabs you in the front.

Mite stares.

MITE
An enemy stabs you in the back.

EXT. WAREHOUSE. RED HOOK WATERFRONT. NIGHT.

K. exits the warehouse, slips into his limo, and drives off.

Mite, crouching in the shadows, checks his watch: 11 p.m.
Carrying two enormous suitcases, he hobbles toward the
warehouse.

EXT. WAREHOUSE. RED HOOK WATERFRONT. NIGHT.

Mite kneels in a dark corner, setting up a hand-made BOMB and
a TIMER, all wired to a row of GASOLINE TANKS.

EXT. PARKING LOT. HARLEM. NIGHT.

Moonstone's MEN, dozens of them, pile into laundry trucks.

MOONSTONE

Where's your man, where's Mite?

KOCKROACH

He'll meet us at the wharf.

Moonstone looks at him.

MOONSTONE

You best be sure.

KOCKROACH

I gave him a house with a white-picket fence.

EXT. ADJACENT WAREHOUSE ROOF. NIGHT.

Mite, with a FLARE GUN in his hand, now stands on the roof of another warehouse, adjacent to K.'s warehouse, with a perfect view inside.

He checks his watch. 11:55. On the dot.
He peers over the edge of the roof.

Down below, a DOZEN laundry trucks pull into the loading dock. K. exits one of the trucks, followed by Moonstone and Moonstone's men, and they all make their way into K.'s warehouse.

As soon as they disappear inside, Mite raises the flare gun - POP. A bright RED FLARE illuminates the night sky.

Seconds later - a line of SEDANS roll quietly down the deserted dock, stopping a good distance from K.'s building.

Skipper and his soldiers, all holding rifles, step out.

And from the other cars: the JEWISH and ITALIAN MOB pour out, all armed.

The Skipper looks up at Mite. Mite gives him the thumbs up.

Skipper gestures, and like a military unit, silent and organized, his army enters K's building.

Mite watches from high above.
Within seconds, the battle begins.
Playing out like the game of chess Mite planned.

Inside K.'s building: windows ILLUMINATE in BRIGHT FLASHES. Even from Mite's vantage point - the SOUND IS THUNDEROUS, the FLASHES blinding: flame-throwers, MACHINE-GUN FIRE, HAND-GRENADES EXPLODING, MORTAR FIRE.

Sound and fury. Absolute mayhem.

MITE

Fuck you. Fuck all of you.

Mite checks his watch: the second hand ticks, ticks, ticks... touches the 12 and...

A MASSIVE EXPLOSION - blowing out dozens of glass windows! Glass, metal, and flaming wood rain down on the docks.

Mite looks down to see: a half dozen bodies, erupting in flames, stumble from the warehouse, before collapsing, dead, onto the street.

The warehouse is an inferno, bathing Mite's face in an orange demonic glow.

In one beautiful move, his gambit worked.

He killed the Skipper, he killed Mac, and he destroyed every gang in the city.

Then - on the roof of K.'s burning warehouse - a figure.

A human body entirely engulfed in flames.

The burning figure raises its arms - waving.

The hands, like pincers.

In Mite's direction.

And then - the entire warehouse EXPLODES in a CAULDRON OF FIRE, engulfing the burning man - and Mite, on the roof of the adjacent warehouse, is BLOWN off his feet.

Mite COUGHS. BLINKS into the smoke, stumbles to his knees, searching frantically through the flames for K.

The entire warehouse has collapsed; a cracked shell, burning brightly, a searing glow of red and yellow and orange.

EXT. PENN STATION. NIGHT.

Mite, his face blackened in ash, hustles through the dark streets outside of Penn Station, clutching a small suitcase, knocking people over on his way.

VOICE (O.S.)

Mite.

Mite, his adrenaline exploding, recoils.

Tab, the peroxide blonde hustler, steps from the shadows.

TAB

They just found her. Sylvie.
O.D.'d.

MITE
No. No. I told her...

Tab, tears in his eyes, puts his hand on Mite's shoulder.

It's just too much. Mite drops his face, then onto Tab's warm hand. He exhales. And he too, is crying.

Tab leads Mite into the darkened doorway.
And Mite - finally, after all this time - does not resist.

INT. TRAIN. NIGHT.

Mite leans against the train window, lights in the night flying by his face, a mask of pain, reflected in the window.

EXT. WAREHOUSE. RED HOOK WATERFRONT. NIGHT.

In the glow of distant flames - Kockroach, his face and body gruesomely burned, his hair reduced to black ash - pulls himself across the cement toward a manhole.

He yanks the manhole cover aside. And flops into the dark.

INT. SEWERS. NIGHT.

K. splashes into the thick slop at the bottom of a dark sewer tunnel.

He floats on his back, his blackened arms spread like an angel, catching his breath. Staring up. The sweet smell intoxicating, the darkness a balm. He smiles.

INT. SEWERS. NIGHT.

K. hobbles through the slop, turning left and right, and then down a long, pitch-black tunnel.

INT. SEWERS. NIGHT.

K. climbs a steel ladder toward a manhole in the sky.

INT. WAREHOUSE. RED HOOK WATERFRONT. NIGHT.

Distant sirens ECHO through another abandoned warehouse, the red siren lights briefly ILLUMINATING the cavernous space.

K, naked, dripping wet in sewage, his face unrecognizable, his burnt body a blackened crisp of scarred flesh, collapses onto the floor. In agony, gasping for breath, dying.

KOCKROACH
Good game, Mite.

Slowly - from every crack in the floor, from the walls, from the ceiling - his cockroach brethren emerge.
And cover his disfigured body. Eating the blunt, dead flesh.

Cockroaches pour into his mouth, providing desperately needed nutrition. And K. chews. Feeling the cockroaches envelope him, eating away the dead flesh, healing him, saving him.

KOCKROACH (CONT'D)
This. Is. Love.

EXT. UPPER WESTSIDE BACKYARD. DAY.

K. - naked but now completely healed, his hair a stubble, exactly like his first metamorphosis - dodges between the hanging laundry of a row house backyard.

DAVID ATTENBOROUGH (V.O.)
One of the fastest animals on
Earth, cockroaches can run at top
speeds of up to 50 body lengths per
second, equivalent to a human being
running 200 miles an hour.

K. plucks down a pair of pants and a dress shirt.

EXT. ALLEYWAY. DAY.

K., in his found clothing, rummages through garbage cans, slurping maggots off a rotten ham sandwich.

DAVID ATTENBOROUGH (V.O.)
Almost impossible to crush,
cockroaches are able to withstand
forces more than 900 times their
body weight without sustaining
injury.

EXT. UPPER WESTSIDE. DAY.

K. snatches an apple off a grocer's outdoor display.

DAVID ATTENBOROUGH (V.O.)
They can squeeze through a crevice
as small as a quarter of their body
height in less than a second, can
withstand extreme temperatures,
hold their breath for 40 minutes.

EXT. WEST 30'S. DAY.

A neon sign of A HAPPY SMILING COCKROACH.
K. is inextricably drawn to this electric, pulsating insect.

DAVID ATTENBOROUGH (V.O.)
And the proteins and pathways
involved in the process of
regenerating enables this little
cockroach to molt, to experience a
kind of physical rebirth.

INT. BROWNSIDE EXTERMINATORS. DAY.

CASSANDRA sits behind a desk, painting her nails.

DAVID ATTENBOROUGH (V.O.)
But in the world of humans, where
money buys food and shelter, this
intrepid cockroach must discover a
new way to survive.

KOCKROACH
I saw your beautiful sign outside.
Give me a job.

Cassandra laughs.

CASSANDRA
Why should we do that?

K. kneels down on the floorboards, whispering into the cracks
between the floor and the wall.

Cassandra strains to see what he's doing, but she can't see
over her desk.

CASSANDRA (CONT'D)
Whaddya doin' over on the floor
there?

K. rises up, showing her his hand. COVERED in COCKROACHES.

Cassandra's gum falls from her mouth. She pushes back her
chair. And lunges toward the back office.

CASSANDRA (CONT'D)

Irv! Irv! You best come out here!

IRV BROWNSIDE, wearing an orange exterminator's jumpsuit, runs from his back-office, alarmed. He stops when he sees K.

K. is holding his other hand against a crack in the wall, onto which crawl a long line of cockroaches, like the Pied Piper summoning the rats.

Irv breaks into a huge grin.

INT. WALL STREET. NIGHT.

Kockroach, now wearing the same orange exterminator's jumpsuit as Irv, squats on the floor of a business office, addressing HUNDREDS OF COCKROACHES, motionless in front of him. K. gestures with his pincer-fingers.

COCKROACH SIGN LANGUAGE SUBTITLES

I will always let you know where
and when it is safe, but I need
this building to be clear of your
colony by morning. No human can see
you. This is for the best of the
colony.

He nods his head and the cockroaches scurry off, disappearing en masse into the darkness of tiny cracks everywhere.

A TV COMMERCIAL FILLS THE SCREEN:

In a suburban kitchen, a "HOUSEWIFE" slaps a kitchen counter with a rag.

HOUSEWIFE

Disgusting! Roaches! I need help!

A PUFF of SMOKE/EXPLOSION SOUND: Irv materializes in a bright flash, awkwardly, in his orange jumpsuit, a superhero cape around his shoulders.

IRV

To the rescue! Brownside
Exterminators is here!

Irv turns to the camera.

IRV (CONT'D)

Brownside Exterminators guarantees
to rid any house or apartment of a
cockroach infestation in 24 hours -
or we'll pay you double our fee!
But don't tell that to the roaches!
A deal like that will surely... *BUG*
them!

**Chyron: Call Brownside Exterminators today! 24 hours or WE
pay YOU! Guaranteed!**

INT. APARTMENT KITCHEN. DAY.

A finger CLICKS off a small tv. The finger belongs to Irv.

IRV

You're making me very rich, you
know that?

Irv bends down, walking around to examine dozens of
cockroaches covering a kitchen counter.

IRV (CONT'D)

Katsaridaphobia. Cockroach is the
number-one insect feared by humans.
Worst thing, they touch your pizza,
you get food poisoning. Ain't
nothing compared to the mosquito.
Most of human history, all human
deaths, 30-40%: Typhoid, Malaria,
Yellow Fever, Dengue Fever - caused
by mosquito borne illnesses.
World's deadliest animal, you know
that?

Irv pokes at a few of the cockroaches and they scatter.

IRV (CONT'D)

No one sees a mosquito and runs
screaming, like they do when they
see this little fella.

Irv smiles.

IRV (CONT'D)

But not me. And not you. We love
'em. My wife Phyllis, God rest her
soul, always said, "how come you
kill 'em if you love them so much?"

K. opens his palm - and a cockroach jumps onto his hand.

KOCKROACH
Survival.

Irv nods, amazed at the sight.

IRV
He likes you. They all like you.
Never seen nothin' like it.

K. extends his other hand and another cockroach, also from the kitchen counter, jumps on his other palm.

IRV (CONT'D)
I wish my Phyllis could have been
here to see you.

Irv is overcome. Starts to tear up.

IRV (CONT'D)
Like the son. We never had.

INT. SUBWAY. DAY.

K. rides the morning subway, packed so tightly with RUSH HOUR COMMUTERS - their faces deadened, pale, lifeless - that he can barely move. For a brief moment, this is bliss. Feeling the crushing pressure of the Human Colony.

Then, like a cockroach, he pushes against the crowd, physically moving and rubbing into them, trying to connect with this mass of humanity.

DAVID ATTENBOROUGH (V.O.)
For the cockroach, the colony is
food sharing, shelter from
predators, pheromone communication,
and successful reproduction.

This angers everyone around him, including a LARGE MAN in a construction hat, who pushes K. away. K. tries again, but as the train pulls into a station, and the doors open, the man, irate, shoves K. hard, out onto the platform.

EXT. SUBWAY. DAY.

K. stands, watching the train leave, left all alone.

INT. WAREHOUSE. RED HOOK WATERFRONT. NIGHT.

K. stumbles through his home, the abandoned warehouse. Peeling paint, rotting debris, stained walls dripping in sewage water - normally all decay smells of great comfort.

But as he watches hundreds of cockroaches swarm in and out of various cracks in the walls, all he experiences is profound longing.

DAVID ATTENBOROUGH (V.O.)
It is not just mere survival, but
prosperity, health, community. It
is life itself.

K. leans against the swarm, almost MOANING, running his fingers through them, longing to MERGE with them.

But it's no use; K. is trapped in a human body and they are insects. They run over him and disappear into the walls.

EXT. MIDTOWN STREET. NIGHT.

K. stands in front of an appliance store window - a BARRAGE of IMAGES from dozens of tv sets: *JFK's assassination in Dealey Plaza; a Hawaiian Punch commercial, "How 'bout a nice Hawaiian Punch?" and one character punches another; U.S. Army F105 fighter-bombers dropping napalm fireballs on North Vietnam; Gilligan launching a pie into Skipper's face on "Gilligan's Island"; Highway Patrolmen battering bloodied and screaming Civil Rights activists in a sea of tear gas in Selma, Alabama.*

DAVID ATTENBOROUGH (V.O.)
There is no further molt for this
cockroach, however. There is no
molt for the human species'
existential crisis: the meaning of
life and death.

Images of death, depravity, and insanity play over K.'s eyes.

INT. WAREHOUSE. RED HOOK WATERFRONT. MORNING.

On a piece of cardboard on the floor, clutching his photographs, K. slams his face, over and over again, into a crack in the wall.

DAVID ATTENBOROUGH (V.O.)
 Having fulfilled the programming of
 his very DNA - having survived -
 this cockroach comes to the unhappy
 conclusion that being forever
 trapped in the human colony will be
 nothing but an interminable
 existence of excruciating agony.

INT. FLOPHOUSE. DAY.

K., still holding his photographs, is in the dusty lobby of
 the same hotel where his story began.

KOCKROACH
 Room 523.

The ancient CLERK doesn't even check the ledger.

CLERK
 You stayed in that room before?
 Good memories?

KOCKROACH
 Memories.

INT. FLOPHOUSE. DAY.

K. is back in the room where it all began. Except for a small
 black-and-white tv on a feeble table, it's exactly the same.

He drops his precious photographs onto the desk. Lines them
 up: the photo of Jack and Nancy at the beach; K. with Mite at
 the 21 Club, cigars in mouth, smiling like kings; a photo-
 booth series of K. and Alice - smiling, kissing, laughing.

He turns on the black-and-white tv. Images of Cuba and
 missiles, as a news broadcast discusses the Bay of Pigs.

NEWSCASTER (O.S.)
 Four years ago, nuclear war was
 averted, but with one push of the
 red button -

As the tv drones on, K. removes the sheet from the bed,
 climbs on a chair, and straps the sheet around his neck.

On the tv - an image of a red button (in black-and-white).

NEWSCASTER (V.O.)
 President Kennedy could have
 destroyed the world.

K. now watches the tv: an image of a HUGE MUSHROOM CLOUD, followed by a cartoon of the Earth after a nuclear explosion.

NEWSCASTER (V.O.)

If a modern atomic bomb was dropped today, scientists believe it would create an apocalyptic wasteland of fire, incapable of supporting human life, a hellscape where only the most hardy insects would survive.

K. removes the sheet from his neck. Moves so close to the tv that his entire face is reflected in the screen.

NEWSCASTER (V.O.)

We can all sleep well at night knowing that honorable men like President Lyndon Johnson, in his infinite wisdom and love for the human race, will protect humanity and never push the red button.

K., frozen - as images of nuclear destruction flicker across his face. And gradually... his mouth curls into a Grimace Smile.

EXT. EMPIRE STATE BUILDING. DAY

The ROAR of APPLAUSE.

Outside of the Empire State Building - K. cuts a long ribbon under a massive banner, "New York City's Own, Real Estate Tycoon Mac MacGuinness, New Owner of Historic Landmark!"

Chyron: 1976. Eleven Years Later.

His temples now grey, but otherwise unchanged, K. waves for FLASHING press cameras, as a CROWD pushes and shoves.

Behind him stand Cassandra and the cadaveresque HUGH BERTRANG, deathly pale and patrician.

INT. PENTHOUSE OFFICE. EMPIRE STATE BUILDING. DAY.

The SOUND OF A CAT PURRING.

On the wall behind K. - a framed photograph of Irv, above a plaque: 'OUR FOUNDER, IRVING BROWNSIDE, 1908-1969'

Alone in his penthouse office, minimalist, spartan - K., pets a cat on his lap, staring at the panoramic view of the entire city stretching out below him.

Bertrang appears in the doorway.

BERTRANG

Seven apartment buildings, three hotels, The Woolworth Building, most of Gramercy Park, and now the Empire State Building. Congratulations, sir. What would you like next?

KOCKROACH

I would like to be the President of the United States of America.

Bertrang grunts.

BERTRANG

Staying in the dark has served you well, sir.

K. looks at Bertrang.

BERTRANG (CONT'D)

Very well. I shall make some calls.

K. raises a hand.

KOCKROACH

In the colony, everyone has their place. There is only one man who can help me get the red button.

INT. GAY BAR. CHICAGO. NIGHT.

Reflected in the bar's mirror, handsome YOUNG MEN in tight clothes, red-faced and sweaty, move to the POUNDING throb of Donna Summer's "*I Feel Love*."

Mite - his face and body visibly diminished, a man broken in the preceding eleven years - slumps against the bar, DISCO LIGHTS flashing on his face, smoking and drinking by himself.

He looks up, catches his reflection in the mirror.
He looks away, hating his own face.

INT. MITE'S APARTMENT. NIGHT.

Mite's one-room apartment. In his underwear, smoking a cigarette in bed, staring at Adam-12 on his tiny television. There's a KNOCK on his door.

Mite peers through the peep-hole.

Sees Bertrang, a briefcase in his hand.

BERTRANG

Mr. Mulligan? Mr. Mickey Mulligan?
I just came from the supermarket,
where you work? They were kind
enough to give me your address.

MITE

Got me confused with some other
guy, pal.

BERTRANG

My name is Bertrang, sir. I'm an
attorney representing the estate -
the quite considerable estate of
your Uncle Rufus.

Mite pauses. Opens the door a crack.

MITE

Uncle Rufus? Oh. Sure. How is old
Uncle Ruffy?

BERTRANG

Yes, sir. It is with a heavy heart
that I must report that Rufus is no
more. My deepest condolences in
this, your time of grief. Your
inheritance, however, is just here
in this briefcase. Good day, sir.

He places the briefcase in front of Mite's door and tips his
hat.

INT. MITE'S APARTMENT. NIGHT.

Mite, having opened the briefcase, gapes at the stacks of
crisp new bills, wrapped in rubber bands, covering his bed.

EXT. GEORGE WASHINGTON BRIDGE. DAY.

A beat-up 60's Buick Electra putters across the George
Washington Bridge.

INT. THE AUTOMAT. DAY.

Mite sits in a booth, nursing a cigarette, staring at what's
become of his beloved automat.

A seedy shell of its former glory: the only patrons are drug addicts, transients, prostitutes; the coffee machines cracked and broken, the neglected Automat slots lined with sad, neglected food, long past their due date.

EXT. COONEY'S HOUSE. DAY.

Alice, older now, still with her polio brace, walks with an eleven year-old boy, NORMAN, toward Cooney's old house.

In his Buick, across the street, Mite crunches down into the car's upholstery.

EXT. COONEY'S HOUSE. DAY.

At the front door of Cooney's house, Mite pauses.
Then RINGS the doorbell.

After a moment, the door opens.
Alice looks at Mite like she doesn't recognize him.
Then she does. And she has to steady herself.

MITE
Hello, Alice.

INT. KITCHEN. COONEY'S HOUSE. DAY.

Mite and Alice sit at her kitchen table, drinking coffee.
They stare in silence, not sure where to begin.

MITE
So you seen Mac lately?

Alice is confused.

ALICE
Mac is dead.

Mite nods, sips his coffee.

MITE
You ever write that book you said
you were gonna write?

She shakes her head no.

MITE (CONT'D)
"Writing's easy. You sit down at
the typewriter. Open your veins.
And bleed." Heard that somewhere.

Alice smiles. Nods.

MITE (CONT'D)
Mac ain't dead.

ALICE
They're all dead.

MITE
Enough, okay?! When was the last
time you saw him?

Alice looks hurt. She stares at him.

ALICE
Eleven years ago. The night you
asked me to marry you. I told him
that I was pregnant. With his
child. I told him that I hated him.
That I loved him. He died the next
night.

Mite pauses.

MITE
Your kid is Mac's kid.

She nods.

MITE (CONT'D)
How'd you get this house?

Mite stares at Alice for a moment, then exhales.

MITE (CONT'D)
After your son was born. A lawyer,
Bertrang, maybe he used a different
name, shows up out of the blue.
Tells you about this Uncle you
never knew you had. Who just died.
Uncle Rufus. Uncle Robert, Uncle
whatever.

She blinks. This is all true.

MITE (CONT'D)
And with the house, you also
inherited a trust. More money than
you could have ever imagined. All
just showed up on your door one
day. Like an angel. From the
Heavens above.

From the look on Alice's face, Mite can tell that everything he said is true.

MITE (CONT'D)

Mac is alive. Show me the deed to the house. Will you do that, Alice?

She stares at Mite, angry, confused, deeply rattled. Then she stands up and marches out of the room.

After a moment, she comes back, holding out the deed.

Mite examines it - *Buyer: Alice Grant. Seller: Brownside Exterminators.*

INT. EMPIRE STATE BUILDING. DAY.

Gripping a crumpled-up page from the Yellow Pages, Mite marches down a hallway.

He pushes past Cassandra, at the front desk, and into...

INT. PENTHOUSE OFFICE. EMPIRE STATE BUILDING. DAY.

K.'s penthouse office, Kockroach facing the windows. Overlooking the known world. K. turns. And smiles.

Mite stops. Stares at K., in a bespoke suit, more beautiful and elegant than ever. Mite laughs.

MITE

You give me a puzzle to solve,
that's your gambit?

KOCKROACH

You wouldn't have come if I just
asked, now would you?

K. glances at a chess board, the pieces all glass.

INT. PENTHOUSE OFFICE. EMPIRE STATE BUILDING. DAY.

K. and Mite are deep in a chess game. K. feels a cockroach on his wrist, unseen by Mite. He nudges it back up his sleeve.

MITE

All this. Just so you can kill me
for what I done?

K. puts his finger to his lips.

KOCKROACH
It's not every day that the student
plays the master.

K. considers the board.

KOCKROACH (CONT'D)
You gave me smoke. I need the
friend who gave me smoke.

Now he moves his Bishop.

KOCKROACH (CONT'D)
I'm not going to kill you. I'm
going to run for President.

MITE
Of your company?

KOCKROACH
Of the United States of America.

Mite laughs. K. is serious.

MITE
Yeah? What's in it for me?

KOCKROACH
Anything you want.

Mite stares.

MITE
An apartment. Fit for a king.

KOCKROACH
Yes.

MITE
To eat in the best restaurants.
Every meal. Every day.

KOCKROACH
Yes.

MITE
Beautiful clothes. Expensive ones.
From France.

K. nods.

MITE (CONT'D)
And lots of money.

KOCKROACH
And shrimp! All the shrimp you
could possibly eat.

Mites laughs.

MITE
Yeah. Sure. That too.

KOCKROACH
You shall have all that and more.

Mite moves one of his Pawns.

MITE
I don't know nothin' about
politics.

KOCKROACH
You know how to play chess?

Mite nods.

KOCKROACH (CONT'D)
Same thing.

K. moves a knight.

MITE
You've gotten better.

KOCKROACH
When you first taught me the ritual
of chess, I thought it was all
about the pieces on the board. Then
I learned the pieces don't matter.

MITE
What matters?

KOCKROACH
The human who's moving them.

Mite glances around the office.

MITE
What line are you in here?

KOCKROACH
Exterminations.

MITE
So. You found your place in the
world at last.

INT. MITE'S WEST VILLAGE APARTMENT. MORNING.

Mite stares at the view of the West Village below. Behind him, MOVERS load brand new furniture into a rooftop apartment.

INT. PENTHOUSE OFFICE. EMPIRE STATE BUILDING. DAY.

Mite, his hair newly cut, wearing elegant new clothes, guides K. and the team, a growing STAFF of men and women, through K.'s campaign posters and strategy.

EXT. MANHOLE. NIGHT.

Mite wades through the West Village, the sidewalk packed with a carnival atmosphere of music, drugs, sex.

Outside *MANHOLE*, a lithe YOUNG MAN, his blond hair glowing in the light from the bar's neon sign, sucks on his cigarette.

He looks at Mite. Flicks his cigarette. Slips back inside. THUMPING MUSIC, pounding like a deep heartbeat.

INT. MANHOLE. NIGHT.

"You Make Me Feel (Mighty Real) by Sylvester, BLASTS over men in tight jeans and t-shirts, cowboy hats, bandanas - dancing, sniffing Poppers.

Mite, at the bar, leans into the handsome young man, who laughs, grabs his ass, and whispers in Mite's ear.

EXT. FEDERAL COURTHOUSE MANHATTAN. DAY.

K. is mid-speech on the steps of the courthouse, his campaign in full swing; Mite, Bertrang, their staff off to the side, watching. Kockroach is commanding, powerful.

KOCKROACH

Today is the dawning of a new and glorious era for America! Where -

A middle-aged woman, NANCY, pushes her way through the crowd.

NANCY

Jack?! Jack!

K. pauses, staring at the woman. It's Nancy, the woman from the hotel photograph, the one who drove Jack to suicide all those years ago.

NANCY (CONT'D)
 My God, it *is* you. I can't believe
 it! Don't you recognize me? It's
 Nancy! Nancy!

She walks closer, now maybe 10 feet from K.

NANCY (CONT'D)
 I don't understand. You haven't
 changed at all.

K. nods at Mite, who rushes to Nancy and escorts her out
 through the crowd, now joined by K.'s SECURITY DETAIL.

INT. KOCKROACH'S PENTHOUSE APARTMENT. NIGHT.

Mite lets himself into K.'s cavernous apartment, every light
 off. Mite is confused. He squints into the dark.

MITE
 Hello?

KOCKROACH (O.S.)
 Hello, Mite.

Mite's eyes finally adjust. He sees K., almost invisible in
 the dark, staring out over the city. Mite finds a light
 switch and flips it.

This the first time Mite's actually seen K.'s apartment. It
 spans a city block. Huge, but there is almost no furniture
 whatsoever. Like no one has even moved in.

MITE
 She's on a bus back to Cleveland.
 Our doctor explained to her that
 she was confused in the head. And I
 gave her a check for twenty
 thousand dollars.

K. nods.

MITE (CONT'D)
 Who was she?

KOCKROACH
 She was from my past.

MITE
 I don't know nothin' about your
 past. Why is that?

KOCKROACH
Tell me about the future.

MITE
As of today. We trail Wilkinson by
a single point.

Mite waits. But K. doesn't react.

MITE (CONT'D)
You don't seem happy, Boss.

KOCKROACH
The red button is still far away.

Mite freezes.

MITE
What'd you say?

KOCKROACH
The future is all.

Mite stares for a moment.

MITE
I thought you said something else.

K. opens a sliding glass door, and leads Mite out onto his veranda. K. leans against the edge, staring at the breathtaking view of nighttime Manhattan below.

Mite joins him. He smiles.

MITE (CONT'D)
Things are goin' okay so far. Too
early to tell, but you might just
get what you want, Boss.

K. is silent.

MITE (CONT'D)
You think about it? What you'll do
as President?

KOCKROACH
All I do now is see the future.

MITE
Yeah? Whaddya see?

K. stares ahead, looking out over the city.

KOCKROACH

I see electromagnetic pulse blasts.
Firestorms in every city.
Explosions melting streets, entire
buildings. Shockwaves shattering
bones. Debris and filth rising so
high in the atmosphere that it
shrouds the Earth, forcing global
temperatures to drop. And starving
99% of all human beings for 100
years.

K. pats Mite on the arm.

KOCKROACH (CONT'D)

Thank you for your work. In a
colony, everyone has their place.

INT. BECKETT'S PUB. DAY.

Once a homey supper club, Beckett's Pub is now a sad dive, a
few DRUNKS, like specters, cowering in the dark.

Mite downs a shot, puts a 100 dollar bill on the bar, waits
for the BARTENDER to sidle up.

MITE

Copper name of Fallon ever come in
here?

BARTENDER

Who's askin'?

MITE

Old friend.

The bartender reaches for the 100, but Mite holds it firm.

BARTENDER

This wino, says he was a cop, comes
in time to time, goin' on and on
how he ran this town. Begs for
drinks until we toss his ass.

Mite lifts his hand.

MITE

Any idea where I find him?

INT. THE SUNSHINE. BOWERY. NIGHT.

In the dim hallway of the Sunshine flophouse, piss and puke painting the walls - Mite, holding a bottle of whiskey in a paper bag, KNOCKS on a door.

INT. THE SUNSHINE. BOWERY. NIGHT.

Splayed on his filthy bed, his undershirt sweat-stained yellow, toes sticking out of his socks, Fallon drinks half the bottle of rotgut in one swig.

DETECTIVE FALLON
Greatest piece of crime fighting
ever to hit this town. Papers
called it 'Fallon's War.'

MITE
You keep a file on Mac?

DETECTIVE FALLON
I kept a file on everybody.

Fallon swallows from the bottle again.

DETECTIVE FALLON (CONT'D)
After the fire - no body found.
Assumed dead, case closed, right?
Maybe a year later, two years, I
see this brown limo. Back window is
open. Who do I see?

MITE
Mac.

DETECTIVE FALLON
So next day I do an official
request to the dead-file room to
pull his file. Word comes back.
There's no file. I never had much
on Mac, whispers and smoke, but I
know there's a file. I made it
myself. So I request the whole file
on the Skipper. Go through page by
page. Nothing. Not a word on Mac.
Like someone went through page by
page with a razor blade. Like Mac
never existed.

He finishes the bottle.

DETECTIVE FALLON (CONT'D)
 Someone with the pull of an
 elephant to do that. Get a file
 from the morgue, scrape it clean.
 Haul my ass in front of the Police
 Corruption Commission, strip my
 rank, my job, my pension, my life.
 Put me here. That's top shelf pull.

MITE
 Revenge for the warehouse?

Detective Fallon cackles.

DETECTIVE FALLON
 You ain't getting it, are you? You
 don't end up on the Bowery for the
 warehouse. You end up on the Bowery
 'cause I happened. To glimpse. His
 face.

INT. KOCKROACH'S PENTHOUSE APARTMENT. NIGHT.

Mite and K. sit across from each other, deep in a chess game.
 After a long pause.

KOCKROACH
 What're you planning, sneaky Mite?

MITE
 I'll never tell.

K. moves his Queen.

MITE (CONT'D)
 But I see what you're doin'.

KOCKROACH
 Oh, I doubt that very much.

K. examines the pieces. Outmaneuvered again. He topples his
 King.

And then Alice and Norman enter the room.

K. stands. Staring at Alice. And then at his son, Norman.
 He is trapped. Trapped by Mite.

MITE
 Check.

The boy steps forward, walking slowly toward K.

KOCKROACH
Hello. I am your -

NORMAN
I know who you are.

K. offers his hand - but Norman, instead, hugs K.
Who stands frozen, not returning the hug.

Alice just stares. Mesmerized by the very sight of K.

KOCKROACH
There's no longer any danger that I
will eat the child. He's too big.

Despite herself, Alice laughs.

EXT. KOCKROACH'S MANSION. DAY.

Two stretch limousines, sandwiched between black security vehicles, drive up a long driveway toward an imposing Châteauesque estate.

INT. FOYER. KOCKROACH'S MANSION. DAY.

DOZENS of STAFF carry luggage, as K. leads Mite, Alice, and Norman into the mansion's enormous foyer.

They gape, unable to hide their shock at the vast wealth and sheer scope of the place.

ALICE
How long have you lived here?

KOCKROACH
Since yesterday.

INT. NORMAN'S ROOM. KOCKROACH'S MANSION. DAY.

K. shows Norman into his room. At the far end, there's a 30-gallon Insect Aquarium.

Norman does a B-line for the Aquarium, where inside, DOZENS of COCKROACHES mass.

Without a second's hesitation, Norman opens the cage door and sticks his hand inside, marveling as the cockroaches swarm over his palm.

Then Norman extends his whole arm inside. More and more cockroaches cover his arm.

Norman is giddy. He laughs.

K. stares at the boy.

INT. ALICE'S ROOM. KOCKROACH'S MANSION. DAY.

K. shows Alice her room. It's the size of a two-bedroom apartment, with multiple bathrooms and walk-in closets.

ALICE

You disappeared. For eleven years.

K. stares, impassive.

KOCKROACH

The smell of you touches a strange place in my belly.

She laughs.

ALICE

I'm supposed to forgive you?

KOCKROACH

You're supposed to live without fear. Without concern for your wellbeing. Or the wellbeing of our son. For the rest of your life.

ALICE

You're my knight in shining armor?

KOCKROACH

I no longer have my armor.

ALICE

You know why I never married?

K. shakes his head no.

ALICE (CONT'D)

Because of you. You fucking bastard.

She slaps K. Hard.

ALICE (CONT'D)

No one is like you.

EXT. SWIMMING POOL. KOCKROACH'S MANSION. DAY.

Mite is cooking vast quantities of meat on a barbecue, a chef's hat on his head. He glances around the property.

Sees Norman and some FRIENDS run around an Olympic-sized swimming pool, shooting each other with water guns.

Sees K. huddling with Bertrang, his STAFF and other ASSOCIATES.

Sees Alice sunbathing, reading a novel. She abruptly stands up, grabs K. by the hand, and drags him away.

Mite continues to watch as they disappear into the house.

INT. KITCHEN PANTRY. KOCKROACH'S MANSION. DAY.

Alice leads K. into the kitchen's enormous pantry.

DAVID ATTENBOROUGH (V.O.)
This cockroach thinks of all the
corruptions to his cockroach nature
caused by the human species that he
has thus far endured.

She pushes him into a corner. She slaps him across the face. Then she bites his neck. So hard that it leaves a mark. And blood. Then she kisses him on the lips. And walks away.

INT. DINING HALL. KOCKROACH'S MANSION. NIGHT.

Mite, Alice, Norman, and K. eat dinner at a table made for 50, the only people, apart from the STAFF in the cavernous room.

DAVID ATTENBOROUGH (V.O.)
The taste for roasted meat,
impersonal mass violence, the use
of words, the curse of thought. He
has allowed himself to change so
much.

K. watches Alice eat her soup.

She catches him staring at her and he continues to stare until she looks away.

INT. NORMAN'S ROOM. KOCKROACH'S MANSION. NIGHT.

K. walks into Norman's room, unseen by Norman and Alice, who are painting the walls of Norman's bedroom, their clothes paint-splattered.

Norman is painting cockroaches all over the walls.

DAVID ATTENBOROUGH (V.O.)
But in this moment, it is safe to
say that no cockroach has ever felt
what he is now experiencing.

K. begins hyperventilating. His human form, out of his control, seems to collapse on itself, his body twitching.

Alice and Norman clock this, concern on their faces.

ALICE
Are you okay?

INT. HALLWAYS. KOCKROACH'S MANSION. NIGHT.

K. bursts into hallway, choking, unable to breathe.

He is weeping. So inexplicably moved by the sight of the mother of his child, and the child himself. Bone-deep, raw, sobbing. What is happening, though he has no understanding of it, is simple. Human emotion.

K. careens down the hallway, slamming off the walls.

INT. FOYER. KOCKROACH'S MANSION. NIGHT.

Down the stairs, into the vast foyer, he slides toward a basement door.

INT. STAIRCASE. KOCKROACH'S MANSION. NIGHT.

K. scrambles down a narrow staircase, not even pausing to turn on lights.

INT. BASEMENT. KOCKROACH'S MANSION. NIGHT.

He bursts into a vast basement and immediately burrows under a pile of abandoned debris, left from the previous owners.

Hidden at the bottom, in the interior of the pile, finally safe in this dark place, K. removes his clothing, licks his hands, and grooms his face and naked body with his tongue.

INT. BASEMENT. KOCKROACH'S MANSION. MORNING.

Darkness. FOOTSTEPS and K. opens his eyes. Frozen.

His eyes discern, in the shadows, the beam of a flashlight.

K. sniffs the air. And his face visibly calms.

A hand, a small hand, appears.

K. looks up to see Norman, standing above, his little hand extended. Norman turns off his flashlight.

NORMAN

Everyone is looking for you. But I
could smell you.

INT. HALLWAY. KOCKROACH'S MANSION. MORNING.

Norman leads K., by the hand, down the hallway.

He stops, and suddenly hugs K.

K. is frozen, arms out, caught off guard.

Then he leans in, pulling Norman close. Powerfully moved by the human contact, by Norman's smell, his skin - the physical sensation of simply holding his son.
For the first time.

After a moment, Norman nods, and disappears back into his bedroom.

INT. BATHROOM. KOCKROACH'S MANSION. MORNING.

K. stands in the shower, the dust and cobwebs from the basement washing off his body onto the white tiles.

INT. K.'S ROOM. KOCKROACH'S MANSION. NIGHT.

In the dark, K. and Alice lie in bed, naked, covered in sweat. She traces her fingers across this body.

ALICE

You're exactly the same as when we
first met.

K. touches his heart and points to her.

Alice, overwhelmed, emotion flooding over her, hugs him.

K. stares, smelling her skin. His brow furrows, his face twitches. He pulls her in tighter. And it appears, perhaps for the first time, that he does actually feel human love.

INT. CHURCH. DAY.

At the altar of a church, Kockroach and Alice kiss.
Mite, Norman, Bertrang and Cassandra throw confetti.

INT. BALLROOM. KOCKROACH'S MANSION. NIGHT.

In the mansion's ballroom, surrounded by STAFF - Mite, Norman, Bertrang and Cassandra - now raise their glasses in a toast.

K. and Alice CLINK their glasses, and drink.
K. kisses Alice, then places his glass on the tray of a passing BUTLER.

The man nods, his gloved hand securing the base of the glass.

INT. KITCHEN. KOCKROACH'S MANSION. NIGHT.

The butler slips through the kitchen, past other STAFF, and into a...

INT. BACKROOM. KOCKROACH'S MANSION. NIGHT.

A backroom. BLACK, no lights.
He pops a tiny flashlight - BLUE LIGHT - in his mouth and holds the champagne flute into the light. FINGERPRINTS.

Holding only the base of the flute with his gloved hand, he drops the flute into a Ziploc plastic baggie.

INT. WILKINSON MANSION. DAY.

SENATOR WILKINSON, silver-haired and fit - staring at a single piece of paper - is surrounded by his AIDES.

SENATOR WILKINSON
"Mac MacGuiness. Possibly of Irish descent."

Wilkinson looks at his aides, who all nod encouragingly.

SENATOR WILKINSON (CONT'D)
 "Birth certificate, public record
 from the MacGuinness Corporation:
 born 1924, Akron, Ohio. Parents:
 Unknown. All other identification,
 school records, driver's license,
 passport, and prior addresses
 unavailable for public records." Is
 this a joke?

His SENIOR AIDE shakes his head no.

SENATOR WILKINSON (CONT'D)
 You've checked with the Bureau?

SENIOR AIDE
 Yes, sir.

SENATOR WILKINSON
 The Agency?

SENIOR AIDE
 Yes, sir.

SENATOR WILKINSON
 NSA?

His aides all nod.

SENATOR WILKINSON (CONT'D)
 He's a multi-millionaire! Owns
 buildings all over Manhattan! There
 must be more information on him
 than this!

SENIOR AIDE
 Yes, sir. Our Interpol contacts
 also came up empty-handed, but I
 remain confident that we will,
 eventually -

Wilkinson holds up his hand.

INT. LIMOUSINE. WESTCHESTER GOLF CLUB. DAY.

K and Mite are in the back of a limousine; K. in golf
 clothes. Mite, looking out the window at the rolling fairway
 of the exclusive Westchester Golf Club.

MITE
 Nice being back together. Don't you
 think?

K. runs his fingers over the spikes of his golf shoes, admiring the cockroach-like spikes.

MITE (CONT'D)
Like one big family.

KOCKROACH
It is a very nice colony, Mite.

MITE
You say that. Like it don't mean nothin'. But I see the way you look at her. The way you look at Norman.

K. smiles. A Mona Lisa smile.

EXT. WESTCHESTER GOLF CLUB. DAY.

A clear spring day. K., Mite, Senator Wilkinson and Wilkinson's son, CHRISTOPHER, a handsome young man, approach the first tee on the tightly groomed, bright green grass.

Wilkinson strolls, smiling, alongside K., who still delights in his spikes and the way they grip.

SENATOR WILKINSON
I appreciate you coming. Enemy territory and all that. Shows character. I admire that.

K. stops. Sticks a shoe deeply into the green. And again. Tries to move. Laughs that he can't.

SENATOR WILKINSON (CONT'D)
You like golf, Mr. MacGuinness?

KOCKROACH
I like the shoes.

Wilkinson laughs, too loudly, and claps K. on the back.

SENATOR WILKINSON
Cut right to the chase. Good man. I'm going to make this very easy for you. You drop out of the race. Right now. We all go on with our lives, happy as clams.

Senator Wilkinson moves close, uncomfortably close to K.

SENATOR WILKINSON (CONT'D)
See, I've taken it easy on you. On your negro wife.
(MORE)

SENATOR WILKINSON (CONT'D)

On your half-breed kid. Hidden away from the public in your big fancy house. I know all about them. The Daily News is standing by. I lift a finger, they run the biggest hit job on you this country's ever seen. Once they run it, you're done.

Senator Wilkinson flashes his campaign smile.

SENATOR WILKINSON (CONT'D)

Unless you drop out, of course.

K. looks at Mite, who is seething, but powerless to say or do anything.

KOCKROACH

This is because you think I care about the color of human skin?

SENATOR WILKINSON

I don't give a rat's fuck what you care about. But the voters do.

K. nods, considering his move.

KOCKROACH

Lift your finger.

SENATOR WILKINSON

Mr. MacGuinness. Let me be clear. I don't like you. I don't like your kind. I will crush you like a bug.

KOCKROACH

Like a cockroach?

SENATOR WILKINSON

Like the nasty, Paddy, Mick, Bogtrotter cockroach piece of shit you are.

K. smiles his old grimace-smile. He gestures at the tee.

SENATOR WILKINSON (CONT'D)

Son. You have no idea who you're fucking with.

Wilkinson takes out a club, sets up a ball, one practice swing, then THWACK! A beautiful shot down the fairway. He smiles, proud of his skill and prowess, a 'fuck you' at K.

Mite hands K. a club, sets up a ball. Leans in, whispering.

MITE

That flag on the pole. Hit the ball. Into the little hole at the bottom there.

K. steps up to the tee, takes one practice swing, exactly as he saw Wilkinson do, then - with perfect form - THWACK!

A towering drive - 250 yards away - the ball bouncing within feet of the hole.

INT. LIMOUSINE. DAY.

K and Mite are in the limousine, heading back to the city.

MITE

Wilkinson is clean. I checked.

K is silent a moment.

KOCKROACH

His son.

MITE

Kid graduated top of his class at Annapolis.

K. looks at Mite.

KOCKROACH

His son. He smells like you.

EXT. WEST VILLAGE. NIGHT.

Through the West Village, Mite, at a distance, trails Christopher Wilkinson, the Senator's son.

Christopher stops, pretends to tie his shoelaces, glances left and right, making sure no one is following him. Then he quickly enters a bar.

Mite palms a tiny camera. He looks around. This street is familiar. Suddenly - he knows. *Manhole*. He's been here before. Many times. The pain on his face is palpable.

After a moment, he pushes inside.

INT. MITE'S APARTMENT. DAY.

Spread over Mite's kitchen table are black-and-white photos. Blurry and out of focus, but it's clear what we're seeing: two men, shirts off, kissing, groping, hands down pants, expressions of sexual passion.

Mite picks one up, flips his lighter.
The flame almost touching the edge of the photograph.

Mite stares at the flame.

INT. PENTHOUSE OFFICE. EMPIRE STATE BUILDING. NIGHT.

Mite, deeply shaken, holds an envelope out for K.

K. reaches for it and Mite withdraws his hand.

MITE

Maybe we got another move?

K. stares. Gestures for the envelope.

Mite hands it over and K. removes the black-and-white photos of Wilkinson's son and the other man.

MITE (CONT'D)

Kid don't mean to be that way.

K. looks right at Mite. With warmth and understanding.

KOCKROACH

We cannot escape our nature.

This stops Mite. So K. does know.

MITE

He'll be destroyed.

K. smiles. Now ice cold.

KOCKROACH

In the end. All will be destroyed.

INT. MAYFLOWER HOTEL. DAY.

Mite's hotel room ashtray is now piled high with cigarette butts.

MITE

None of this is in the record.
Bertrang and his pals scrubbed it
clean, made up a whole new
background as fake as the color of
his hair. But you write it up like
I told you. You'll be writing the
truth.

He stabs out his cigarette.

MITE (CONT'D)

The kicker, missy? Wilkinson's son.
Kid offed himself this morning.

The young journalist, Lucy, gasps.

LUCY

Oh, my God, that's terrible.

MITE

The Boss killed him. And so did I.

Mite lights another cigarette.

MITE (CONT'D)

This time. For tellin' you the
whole shebang. He'll kill me. I'm
looking forward to the fireworks.
Burn away the leech on my soul.

He gets up, starts for the door. Turns back.

MITE (CONT'D)

His sideburns. He paints 'em.
Paints 'em GREY. I been this close
to him. Seen his pores. That man
has not aged one bit since 1957.

Mite laughs. It's the laugh of a madman.

MITE (CONT'D)

You're gonna say I'm cuckoo in the
belfry. When he told me he was a
cockroach inside? Maybe it's true?

LUCY

All due respect, Mr. Mulligan. That
is cuckoo in the belfry.

Mite nods.

MITE

Here's to the Pulitzer, sweet pea.

EXT. MAYFLOWER HOTEL. DAY.

Mite shuffles out of the hotel lobby, squints into the sunlight. At long last, he's unburdened himself. He can finally breathe. A deep inhalation, a delicious exhalation. He smiles.

Until a brown limousine pulls up alongside him. Mite thinks for a moment about running, but knows it's no use.

The electric window of the limo BUZZES down. Revealing K.

Mite is still. And then he slips into the limo.

INT. LIMOUSINE. DAY.

Mite's reflection against the window, as he takes in the cold, austere buildings of Washington, D.C.

MITE

She's one of yours?

K., in a tuxedo, nods.

MITE (CONT'D)

Room was bugged?

KOCKROACH

I enjoyed listening to the story of our friendship. I did.

Mite smiles.

MITE

You kill me. Won't matter in the end. I'm still gonna get your King.

K. flips a switch, then to Jong-Soo on the other side of the glass partition.

KOCKROACH

The ballroom, please, Jong-Soo.

K. places his hand on Mite's arm. A tender gesture.

KOCKROACH (CONT'D)

Dear Mite. I love you. And want you to know. You are not cuckoo in the belfry.

He smiles at Mite. A genuine human smile.

INT. BALLROOM. NIGHT.

Backstage, K. stares out at the audience of the WASHINGTON ELITE. Mite sidles up. Joins him staring into the crowd.

MITE

I know what the red button is.

At this, K. doesn't flinch. Just keeps staring ahead.

MITE (CONT'D)

I know your plan. But you will
never use it.

Mite nods at Alice, fixing Norman's tie, also backstage, twenty feet away.

MITE (CONT'D)

Because of them. Because of love.
It's all that matters. The most
important thing. The only thing.
And something you have to be human
to feel.

K. continues to stare into the audience.

MITE (CONT'D)

I know you don't lie. So answer me
one question. Do you love them?

K. looks over at Alice and Norman. Then directly at Mite.

KOCKROACH

Yes.

MITE

Checkmate.

K. stares at Mite, his face unreadable.

INT. BALLROOM. NIGHT.

On stage, a spotlight hits Bertrang; he taps a microphone.

BERTRANG

Distinguished guests - ladies, and
gentlemen - may I kindly have your
attention!

The huge black-tie crowd of the city's richest and most powerful pause their dinner to look to the stage.

BERTRANG (O.S.) (CONT'D)

Please join me in welcoming to the stage, the next President of the United States of America! Mac MacGuinness, his wife Alice, and their son, Norman!

As K., Alice, and Norman stroll out, holding hands - the energy in the room is electric - flash-bulbs SPARK and POP and the crowd CHEERS wildly.

K. smiles at Alice and Norman; and they beam back pure love.

K. glances back at Mite. With a smile that can only be described as unadulterated love. He touches his heart.

Mite, unable to resist, touches his own hand to his heart.

K. kneels down, reaching out to touch his supporters near the stage. They SURGE forward, caressing him, rubbing him, hugging him, loving him.

DAVID ATTENBOROUGH (V.O.)

Not since the colony before his tragic molt, his fellows climbing over each other, feasting and mating, has this cockroach felt such a profound sense of peace, calm, and happiness. With his mate and nymph and his closest comrade accompanying him - this moment is the closest he has come to feeling - among the humans - the purity and love of the colony.

Illuminated by constant FLASHES, the audience CHANTING cacophonous, K. returns to the microphone. He holds up his hand. And the audience immediately goes silent.

KOCKROACH

Tonight is the dawning of a new and glorious America. An America where you shall never again be squashed from above by the powerful! Where your bellies shall always be full! Where every member of our great community shall have a home! Where neither the color of your skin nor the history of your people shall not determine your ability to flourish! As every child in our great country pledges, one Nation under God, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all!

(MORE)

KOCKROACH (CONT'D)

A great and united colony! Bonded!
By Love!

Flashbulbs explode, a barrage of PURE WHITE LIGHT.
The crowd CHANTS: *MacGuinness! MacGuinness! MacGuinness!*

DAVID ATTENBOROUGH (V.O.)

This cockroach can smell every
single member of the colony in
front of him. Their armpit sweat,
saliva, urine. Their pheromones.
And he can smell their love. And in
this moment, he wonders if he needs
the red button after all.

K., beaming, kisses Alice, places his hand on Norman's
shoulder. And looks over his colony.

Gathered among the shoes of the crowd in the front, unseen by
the APPLAUDING humans above - THOUSANDS of TINY COCKROACHES
have gathered - absolutely still - all facing K.

From K. - a barely perceptible nod.
And like a wave, the cockroaches undulate, all seeming to nod
back at K.

Then K. returns to smiling at the crowd.
A cockroach smile.
A human smile.

A smile that is both.
A smile that is neither.

FIN.