

MIDTOWN AFTER DARK

An Historical Drama

Based on a true story as told in the award-winning book
After Dark: Birth of the Disco Dance Party

Logline

In 1971, five young Black men bring disco to Midtown Manhattan—but as success attracts organized crime, racism, and betrayal, their cautious schoolteacher leader must fight to keep it all from collapsing.

WGA East Registration: 1370562

TEASER

EXT. ORPHEUS DISCOTHEQUE - NIGHT
SUPER: 1973

It's 8 PM. A sedan idles across the street. Behind the wheel, a BLACK MAN (30s) watches the club. Still. Patient.

INT. ORPHEUS DISCOTHEQUE - NIGHT

Three BARTENDERS move like a pit crew - filling ice bins, cutting limes, stacking glasses.

WAITRESS #1 and WAITRESS #2 (20s, Black) align cafe tables with practiced precision. TOSHIO (M 60, Japanese) vacuums, meticulous.

Behind the bar, KENNY (25, Black) clocks everything - calm, in command, in control.

Standing at the bar: JOHN (30s, Black), composed, watchful, a sharp dresser with a large Afro and mustache.

MEL (30s, Black), sharp, kinetic, business-like, clean-shaven with a short, neat Afro.

DERRICK (30s, Black), neat, restless. Dresses in dark clothes, except for loud, patterned pants and gold chains.

Cash. Papers. Notes spread out on the bar.

In the DJ booth - CHARLES (30s, Black) has a small mustache, short Afro and a surgical focus as he hovers over turntables.

JOHN
(shouts)
Charles - play that joint I like.
You know, with the sax.

Charles doesn't look up. Moves like a surgeon.

The needle drops. Music kicks in.

Heads lift. Feet find rhythm. The room comes alive.

WAITRESS 1
Got an extra copy I can buy?

CHARLES
Two left.

JOHN
Turn it up.

The volume climbs. Heads move. Feet move.

John dances with WAITRESS 1—but his eyes keep moving.
Clocking everything. He sees a chair slightly out of position
and dances over to place it perfectly.

Mel grooves in place, but he's watching too.

Kenny slips in beside John.

KENNY
A guy outside is asking questions.

John doesn't react.

JOHN
About?

KENNY
Who owns the place?

John stops dancing.

JOHN
Next time, tell him come inside.
Buy a drink.

KENNY
Kenny nods. Moves off.

DERRICK
Oh shit!
(beat)
Emma's birthday.
(to John)
Lemme run out, grab something.

JOHN
Doors open in 15 minutes. We gotta
be ready.

DERRICK
I'll be quick. I just need
chocolate or flowers--something.

John checks his watch.

JOHN
Go. Ten minutes.

Derrick rushes out the front door and immediately returns.

DERRICK
My car's blocked in.

JOHN
Take mine.

John tosses him keys. Toshio takes garbage out the back door.

DERRICK
Okay, thanks. Man, she better
appreciate this.

Derrick hustles out the front door.

John straightens a stack of cocktail napkins on the bar.

EXT. PARKING LOT NEXT TO ORPHEUS - NIGHT

Dim. Quiet. John's sedan is near a dumpster.

Toshio approaches with a garbage bag—

—then hears something. Rustling.

He stops. Listens.

Derrick approaches the car. Keys in hand.

From the shadows—A MAN steps out. Fast.

A flash of metal. A GUN. The man says something.

POP. POP. POP. POP. POP.

Derrick jerks—hit.

Toshio freezes—then backs away, unseen. Drops the bag. Runs.

INT. ORPHEUS DISCOTHEQUE - NIGHT

Derrick staggers to the front door, opens, takes one step
inside and collapses.

Blood spreading fast.

Music SCREECHES to a stop.

A glass SHATTERS—SLOW MOTION—Then—Chaos.

WAITRESS #1 screams. WAITRESS #2 freezes—then sobs.

John and Mel rush to Derrick. Drop to their knees.

MEL

Jesus—

JOHN

Stay with him—stay with him—

Toshio rushes in, shaking.

TOSHIO

I saw—he said something—I—

JOHN

Is he still out there?

John bolts to the front door—yanks it open. Empty street. Too quiet. He shuts it. Locks it. Turns—commanding now.

JOHN (CONT'D)

Toshio—back door. Lock it.

Toshio runs.

JOHN (CONT'D)

Kenny—call an ambulance—NOW.

Charles rushes from the DJ booth to John's side.

Kenny sprints. John kneels next to Derrick. Blood everywhere.

MEL

He's not breathing...

John processes. Fast. Shuts it down. Stands.

JOHN

Nobody says a word. To anyone.
We're opening late tonight. Mel -
we can't open until 11--can you
make a sign?

(then, to Toshio)

What did the man say to Derrick?

Sirens build in the distance.

END OF TEASER

ACT 1

INT. MANHATTAN CENTER, EDGE OF BALLROOM - NIGHT
Super: Five Years Earlier

A packed, aging ballroom. Sweat-moistened collars. Jackets hang on chair backs. The air is thick, humid, alive. A young Black crowd (20-25) moves. A band locks into a Motown groove.

The floor MOVES--tight rhythmic, communal. Not just dancing--release.

Mel and Charles. Suits. Watching. Absorbing. Heads nodding.

Tracking who's dancing together. Who leads, who follows.

DERRICK slides in. Drink in hand. Wearing black and white striped pants.

DERRICK
How you doin'? I'm at all your
dances. How 'bout a discount?

MEL
You keep comin' don't you?

DERRICK
Wouldn't miss 'em.

Derrick leans toward Mel.

(low)
I got somethin' if you're lookin'.

Mel doesn't look at Derrick.

MEL
I'm good.

Derrick studies Mel. Decides not to pursue and heads toward the dance floor.

INT. DANCE FLOOR AREA - NIGHT

Derrick sees an attractive YOUNG LADY standing by herself and extends his hand. The young lady (25, Black) is wearing lots of jewelry and a shiny outfit. They dance. Eyes lock.

DERRICK
I haven't seen you at any Best of
Friends dances before. This your
first one?

YOUNG LADY

Yeah. I just heard about this a few days ago. I saw you talking to the guys. Are you a part of the group?

DERRICK

No--wish I was. They give the best parties. I'm Derrick.

YOUNG LADY

I'm Emma. Glad to meet you.

DERRICK

My pleasure Emma. I like dancin' with you. You bring glamour.

Emma lights up with a bright smile. Steps get higher.

INT. MANHATTAN CENTER ENTRANCE - NIGHT

Mel and Charles drift toward the entrance.

MEL

We cultivated this market.

CHARLES

Yup, lotsa Queens people here.

TWO MEN, early 30s Black, hardened, in suits, sit at a welcome table. Mel and Charles approach.

Mel leans down between the two; low, tense exchange, but it's inaudible. Mel straightens. Processing.

Mel slams the table. Second seated man rises. Slow, dangerous. Tension spikes.

MAN 1

You got sompen to say?

MEL

You skimmin' us?
(beat)

They stare at each other. No blinking.

MAN 1

Careful man. I don't like you gettin' up in my fuckin' face.

Mel's fists tighten, steps toward the man. Charles pulls Mel's arm.

MEL
Don't pull on me, Charles!
(shouting at the two men)
Think you're slick? You're not.

Charles succeeds in getting Mel to the far side of the lobby.

INT. MANHATTAN CENTER, LOBBY CORNER - NIGHT

CHARLES
No sense gettin' into a fight.

MEL
Fuckin' city guys. Can't trust 'em.

Mel grimaces, lips tighten.

INT. 3RD GRADE CLASSROOM - DAY

A film of a beaver building a dam ends. John is wearing a shirt and tie.

JOHN
If a storm destroys a beaver's dam--
what happens?

JEROME and a few other students' hands pop up.

JEROME
I know Mr. Latimore! I know!
They build a new dam.

JOHN
That's right. 30 times it goes
down, 30 times they rebuild. They
never give up.

Students scream and scramble as a mouse runs along the wall.

John spots the mouse, starts to scream, jumps onto his desk.

STUDENT 1
Aren't you supposed to protect us?

STUDENT 2
You can't from on top of your desk!

The class erupts in laughter.

JOHN
I got it under control.

STUDENT 1

Mr. Latimore is scared of a mouse!

The mouse runs out the classroom through the half open door.

JOHN

Settle down, everybody. It's gone.

John climbs down off his desk as the bell rings.

JOHN (CONT'D)

Quiz tomorrow on chapter 8.

John packs up papers into a briefcase, neatens up his desk, and leaves the empty classroom.

INT. SCHOOL HALLWAY - DAY

John passes the admin office where the SECRETARY (F 45, white) waves him in. Students 1 and 2 stare at John as they leave the office.

INT. SECRETARY'S OFFICE - DAY

SECRETARY

I heard you're scared to death of a little mouse.

JOHN

I had everything under control.

She smiles and dubiously shakes her head.

SECRETARY

Sure John Wayne--this is for you.

She hands John a folded piece of paper. He opens it.

SUPER: MALONEY'S. 5PM - C

John breaks a slight smile and hurries down the hall.

INT. SCHOOL HALLWAY AND LOBBY - DAY

John steps into a lobby phone booth and dials.

JOHN

Hey Cheryl...Yeah. I got a meeting.
Can we push it to 7? Okay.

EXT./INT. MALONEY'S BAR - DAY

John parks his car and hustles into Maloney's, a classic Irish bar on a busy commercial street.

Mets banners hang near the TV above the back bar.

In the rear, John joins Mel, Charles, LARRY (M 25, Black), and ROY (M 25, Black) in a large booth. Larry is clean-shaven, Roy has a neat mustache.

Larry slides to make room for John.

CHARLES

You know these cats?

JOHN

Never seen 'em.

John slaps five with Larry, Mel, and Roy, then greets Charles with a special handshake that ends with them wiggling fingers at each other. John chuckles, the others smile.

CHARLES

John is head of the Kingsmen.

MEL

Ya can't join us while you're a Kingsman. It's a conflict.

BARTENDER brings a pitcher of beer and glasses. Larry pours.

JOHN

The old house is gone, so, no more Kingsmen events.

LARRY

Being in Nam, I missed all the parties. But not any more!

CHARLES

Didn't miss that much.

LARRY

Heard you guys lost money in the city. Bad partners will kill ya.

MEL

Fuck you!
(pause)
You're right.

LARRY

I know!
(chuckling)

CHARLES

Those city guys stole the profits.
We shoulda netted about \$350. That
ain't a mistake — it's a decision.

LARRY

You need partners you can trust.

ROY

(talking to John)
You and Charles work together?

JOHN

No, different schools.

LARRY

Kids all day would drive me crazy.

Larry raises the empty pitcher to the bartender.

CHARLES

You mean crazier.

Small chuckle.

JOHN

It's just us, right?

MEL

Spencer couldn't come, but he's in.

ROY

How many dances do ya plan to give?

MEL

Three, four a year.

LARRY

I'm in. But I hope y'all recognize
that every time large crowds
gather, there's a possibility of a
stabbing or shooting. And for us,
dealing with cash, a robbery.

JOHN

We'll get a bouncer.

LARRY

One bouncer ain't enough. We need a plan for when things go wrong, not just someone to throw people out.

ROY

Sounds interesting, but I'm not gonna have the time for this.

JOHN

Then you need to leave.

ROY

Goddamn, man.

Roy stares, grumbles something inaudible, and leaves. Bartender brings a new pitcher. Larry pours.

LARRY

What should we call ourselves?

MEL

How 'bout "The Best of Friends"?

JOHN

Okay, yeah.

CHARLES

One rule: We never skimp on the sound system. Music is the draw.

The others express agreement with nods or mmmh hmm.

JOHN

Charles, you were a math major. You should be treasurer.

CHARLES

You gonna dump that on me, huh?

MEL

It's a good fit.

LARRY

Let's toast our new social club.

JOHN

To The Best of Friends!

All raise their glass.

ALL

To The Best of Friends!

CHARLES

I need everyone's contacts for a master mailing list.

LARRY

You want ALL my girlfriends' info?

CHARLES

No, just the good lookin' ones.
(smiles)

On the way out, they pause to watch the TV behind the bar.

TV NEWSCASTER

Breaking News. The Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. has been shot. The civil rights leader was in Memphis, Tennessee, and was shot while standing on a second-floor balcony at the Lorraine Motel. Dr. King was in Memphis to support the sanitation workers' strike...
(TV sound trails off)

EXT. OUTSIDE MALONEY'S - NIGHT

All exchange worrisome glances as they step outside. The street seems quiet. No one speaks for a while.

JOHN

I'm not surprised.

MEL

He was in Memphis. Helping garbage men. That's what they couldn't stand.

LARRY

In the field, you learn to read when something bad is coming. I been reading this for a while.

CHARLES

They had to know what this would start.

JOHN

Evers. Malcolm. Now King. Who's next?

Strains of Sam Cooke's "A Change is Gonna Come". They walk.

INT. MANHATTAN CENTER ENTRANCE TO BALLROOM - NIGHT

John, Mel, and Charles stand behind a welcome table. Several CUSTOMERS approach.

CHARLES

Good evening. Please sign in.

John overhears a GUEST at a phone booth near the entrance. He holds up a finger to stop Mel from talking.

INT. PHONE BOOTH AT ENTRANCE - NIGHT

GUEST

Get down here Bernie! The place is filled with fine mamas! Come now!

INT. MANHATTAN CENTER ENTRANCE - NIGHT

Mel and John watch as well-dressed guests arrive.

MEL

Hey, I got a new job.

JOHN

What's the new gig?

MEL

Young & Rubicam Advertising. It's in Midtown.

JOHN

That's big. You gonna leave us?

MEL

No. I'll be here.

INT. DANCE FLOOR AREA - NIGHT

John and Mel stroll to the edge of the dance floor.

A Latin band hits a Mambo as SPENCER (M 30, Black) and CARMEN (F 25, Puerto Rican) tear it up. People stop to watch. As the song ends, applause. Spencer brings Carmen over.

SPENCER

Guys - this is Carmen.

Carmen smiles and nods.

JOHN

Nice to meet ya. You guys look good out there.

SPENCER

I do what I do.

Mel acknowledges Carmen with a nod. Spencer leans over to John.

SPENCER (CONT'D)

(whispers)

Good dancers get the girls.

Spencer and Carmen saunter away. Mel and John give each other a knowing glance.

MEL

Spencer loves the women.

JOHN

Yeah, too much. When he drops 'em, they stop coming around.

INT. YOUNG & RUBICAM LOBBY - DAY

Mel waits. It's 7:35 AM when CLIFF (M 50, white) arrives.

CLIFF

Good morning Mel. You're early.

MEL

Morning Cliff. First day.

CLIFF

I like that. Let's get you settled.

Cliff walks Mel into a large room with six long rows of desks. Mel's desk is in the back of the empty room.

A clock shows 7 PM. Few people are still working. Mel starts packing up.

BARRY (M 25, Black), stops by Mel's desk. He's tall, athletic, and sports a short, neat Afro hair style.

BARRY

Hi, I'm Barry.

MEL

Good to meet you.

BARRY

Only a few of us are here. Most don't last a year.

MEL

They want account managers who think analytically.

BARRY

Yeah, but it's also how much the client likes you. Feel free to catch me if you need to talk.

Mel takes it in and nods. Barry leaves. Mel heads out.

EXT. MADISON AVE. - NIGHT

Outside, an elderly HOMELESS MAN is sitting on the sidewalk with a cup and cardboard sign: "I'm hungry. Please help!"

MEL

How about a sandwich?

HOMELESS MAN

Yeah, I'd love a sandwich!

Moments later, Mel hands him one.

HOMELESS MAN (CONT'D)

God bless you!

Mel has an extra bounce in his step. He notices packed bars with all white patrons. Country music is heard.

The few Blacks he sees enter the uptown side of the subway.

Mel approaches La Martinique. It's elegant. A step up from the Manhattan Center.

INT. LA MARTINIQUE - NIGHT

"Express Yourself" by the Charles Watts 103rd Street Rhythm Band gets louder with each step. A few dozen guests are enjoying the scene. Most are dancing.

A moment later, John jogs down the same staircase.

JOHN

Whose birthday is it?

MEL
Brenda Pike. Here's the thing, I
hardly know 'er.

JOHN
You got a rep.

MEL
You got a bigger rep. Let's go.

The two sashay to a cafe table with TWO LADIES.

Mel and John extend their hands and join other dancers. All
are excited and having big fun.

After the dance, a stern-looking, LARGE MAN (M 25, Black)
approaches John and his dance partner. He stares at John,
then gives the girl a hug and a kiss. John and Mel walk away.

INT. JOHN'S PARENTS' HOME - NIGHT

John, Mel, Charles, Larry, and Spencer are in an enclosed
front porch. John and Charles wear paneled bowling shirts.

MR. LATIMER, John's dad, pops into the room.

MR. LATIMER
Hello everybody.

ALL
Hi Mr. Latimer.

Mr. Latimer pulls John aside.

MR. LATIMER
Working late tonight. Can you bring
me fish & chips when you're done?

JOHN
Sure Pop.

Mr. Latimer leaves the room.

MEL
Your Dad's a good carpenter.

JOHN
He is.
(pause)
What do ya think about a weekly
after-work disco in Midtown? No
band, just records.

LARRY
(with skepticism)
Midtown? For Black folks? Are you
kiddin'?

MEL
Nobody said it would be easy.
Midtown would be new and exciting
for our crowd.

LARRY
You know why Black folks don't hang
in Midtown? That country shit they
play is a nigger repellent.

John, Mel, and Spencer laugh. Charles shakes his head.

MEL
La Martinique is viable.

JOHN
No man, it's too big.

MEL
Wait, we get 400 people at our
dances.

JOHN
A dance is one-shot. This is EVERY
week. We miss, we lose everything.

LARRY
Listen to John, Mel.

Mel stares at the door, then at the cash box on the table.

MEL
If it works, we get a windfall.

SPENCER
A disco for Blacks in Midtown? Are
you for real? That's not us.

MEL
What the hell! You guys don't even
wanna consider La Martinique...What
do you think Charles?

CHARLES
If you wanna talk about crowds,
good music can bring 'em in.

JOHN
I'll keep lookin'.

LARRY

They turn us down 'cause they think
we're drug dealers, or a gang.

JOHN

Yeah, there's that.

Sighs and groans.

FADE TO BLACK.

END OF ACT 1

ACT 2

INT. OFFICE OF A MIDTOWN NIGHTCLUB - DAY

John and Charles are in MR. THOMPSON'S office, the owner.

MR. THOMPSON
It's too risky.

JOHN
Risky? Why is it risky?

MR. THOMPSON
Your crowd is...Black.
(not a question, a label)

John doesn't flinch.

JOHN
Yes.

MR. THOMPSON
That won't work here.

Silence. Charles shifts slightly. John doesn't move.

JOHN
Why not?

Mr. Thompson leans back.

MR. THOMPSON
It'll drive my customers away. This
isn't personal. It's business.

JOHN
We run a clean operation.

MR. THOMPSON
This neighborhood is spoken for.
Ever hear of Matty "The Horse"? If
you succeed, you'll attract
attention. Why not try uptown?

EXT. CHERYL'S HOUSE - NIGHT

John rings the bell. Cheryl opens the door.

JOHN
Hi sweetheart.

John steps inside and hugs Cheryl.

CHERYL
You're late.

JOHN
Aren't you happy to see me?

CHERYL
I am. My parents went out.

JOHN
Oh, really?

John and Cheryl immediately start stripping and make their way to Cheryl's bedroom. John quickly picks up the discarded clothes and brings them into the bedroom, locks the door.

Urgent movements. Legs wrap around John's waist. The bed.

John gets on top. They get down.

CHERYL
Oh my God! Don't stop!

Slow, then faster. The Delfonics' "Didn't I (Blow Your Mind This Time)" plays softly.

INT./EXT. CHINATOWN MOVIE THEATER - NIGHT

John, Charles, and Larry watch "Come Drink With Me", a movie. A female with a sword beats up a dozen men.

John doesn't blink. Charles leans forward, Larry grins. They exit and stride down the street.

LARRY
Man, she took out all those men
like it was nothing.

JOHN
Didn't rush it either.

LARRY
Hey, you find a venue yet?

JOHN
Gonna check out the Ginza tomorrow.

JOHN (CONT'D)
Hold up.

John steps into a phone booth, drops a dime, dials.

INT. PHONE BOOTH - NIGHT

JOHN

Cheryl? I know. I can't come tonight, okay? I'm with the guys.

CHERYL (V.O.)

It's always the guys. Maybe you should marry one of 'em.

JOHN

C'mon, I'll make it up to you.

CHERYL (V.O.)

Whatever.

JOHN

It was a surprise, but I'll tell you now. The Temps and Tops are coming to the Copa. I got tickets.

CHERYL (V.O.)

Well, that's a good start.

JOHN

I'll call ya tomorrow.

John hangs up, stares for a moment.

JOHN (CONT'D)

(under his breath)

A good start? Damn!

John rejoins Charles and Larry.

JOHN (CONT'D)

Let's go.

EXT./INT. HARLEM BROWNSTONE - NIGHT

John, Charles, and Larry climb the steps of a brownstone and enter the parlor.

A well-groomed MAN (25, Black) approaches John, Charles, and Larry. His voice has tension.

MAN

Listen, I need to say sompen and I'm tryin' to be polite. See the girl with the blue scarf?

(pointing)

She's mine - don't dance with her. I'm asking nicely. Got it?

The three men nod affirmatively.

JOHN

Got it.

LARRY

That felt unnecessary.

Later, Mel enters the party. Several couples are dancing. He eyes the girl with a blue scarf and asks her to dance.

A moment later, the man taps Mel on the shoulder.

MAN

Can I talk to you?

MEL

Sure, as soon as I finish dancing.

The man moves like a trained fighter.

Punches Mel in the eye, pulls Mel's jacket over his head. Connects a powerful punch to the girl's face.

Dancing stops. Music stops. Guests express shock and fear.

Larry moves before anyone else. Charles, and TWO OTHER MEN, join Larry and pin the man on the floor.

JOHN

(addressing Mel)

Your turn. You can do whatever you want to this guy.

Mel takes a step toward the man. Thinks about hitting him.

MEL

I can't...That's not me.

JOHN

I know...

(shouting)

Get 'em outta here!

(normal voice)

You're too nice, man. He didn't give YOU a chance. He cold-cocked you real good. Lemme see your face.

Larry and the other men drag the man out.

MEL

I'm okay.

John examines Mel's face. Mel wipes blood from his nose.

JOHN

You got a black eye and you're
swellin' up. Can you go to work
lookin' like that?

MEL

Got to. That motherfucker's got a
mental problem.

JOHN

Heard he was in Nam. Told us not to
dance with his girl.

MEL

Thanks for lettin' me know.

JOHN

Didn't have a chance.

MEL

Lotsa crazies out there.

Charles and Larry return after dragging the vet out of the
brownstone. Charles approaches Mel.

CHARLES

You okay? 'Cause I ain't doin' that
again.

John gestures toward the blue scarf.

JOHN

How do you do that to your own
girlfriend?

John and Mel slide over to the blue scarf. She's surrounded
by THREE WOMEN. Her face is bloodied and swollen.

JOHN (CONT'D)

She needs a hospital.

WOMAN 1

Yeah, we're taking her.

MEL

Damn. Maybe I shoulda hit 'em.

JOHN

That's not how you roll.

MEL

Not sure how to take that.

EXT./INT. CHERYL'S HOUSE IN QUEENS - DAY

John parks in front of CHERYL'S (F 22, Black) house. He's wearing a paneled shirt, jogs up the stoop. Rings the bell. Cheryl appears in a sexy sweater and jeans.

JOHN

Hi sweetheart. Sorry about
yesterday. You forgive me?

They embrace and exchange a quick kiss.

CHERYL

I don't know. Every conversation
turns back to the club. I'm
starting to feel like an employee.

INT. ENCLOSED FRONT PORCH - DAY

Cheryl leads John to a sofa where they sit. MRS. LUCAS (Black F, 55), Cheryl's mother, appears at the doorway.

MRS. LUCAS

John, you been comin' 'round here
for a while. Cheryl's at the age
where her friends are getting
engaged. Starting families. I just
wanna make sure my daughter doesn't
get left behind waiting on a man
who doesn't know what he wants.

JOHN

Hi, Mrs. Lucas. I would never do
anything to hurt Cheryl.

John pulls his mustache, then nervously neatens up a stack of
magazines on the coffee table.

MRS. LUCAS

Maybe not deliberately. If I was
Cheryl, I'd drop you in a minute.

John grimaces. Mrs. Lucas stares at him then leaves the room.

JOHN

Wow! Why is your mom down on me?
(pause)

CHERYL

She's not wrong, you know. I need
to know there's a tomorrow.

JOHN
Understood. I just wanna be ready.

CHERYL
Ready for what?

JOHN
Don't know. Something bigger.

CHERYL
What do you want John?

JOHN
(loud, frustrated tone)
I told you...I don't know.

CHERYL
You're building something. But I don't feel like I'm in it. You have to decide what you want to do. Tell you right now, I'm not gonna sit around waiting forever. I need to move on with my life.

JOHN
Understood. I'm doing my best. You are definitely part of my plans.

INT. OFFICE IN THE GINZA - DAY

John and Charles are seated in MR. CHIU's office. Mr. Chiu (55 Chinese-American), friendly and fit, sits behind a desk.

JOHN (CONT'D)
So we can have Thursday nights?

MR. CHIU
Yes. However, I require a \$1,000 bar guarantee--every Thursday. Does this work for you?

JOHN
(hesitates)
What? A \$1,000 guarantee? I can't commit to that. Is that standard for all renters?

MR. CHIU
Sorry, that's my best offer.

JOHN
It's too much.

John and Charles leave and pause outside the Ginza.

CHARLES

He didn't answer your question.
Obviously, the answer was "no".

John steps into a phone booth. Charles listens next to John.

JOHN

Mel, what do you think?

MEL

The Ginza is perfect, but that nut
is high.

JOHN

It's fucked up that we gotta
guarantee \$1,000.

(pause)

This is gonna sound crazy, but I
think, maybe we should do it. I
know we'll lose money the first few
Thursdays, but once word gets out,
we got a shot.

CHARLES

We'll probably have to chip in to
cover the ante for a coupla weeks.

MEL

Larry and Spencer won't go for it.

JOHN

If we do this, everybody's got to
be on board. I'll talk to them.

EXT. GINZA - NIGHT

The word "Ginza" is above a windowed door.

John, Mel, Larry, Charles, and Spencer enter the Ginza.

INT. GINZA - NIGHT

The men enter the Ginza and descend one flight to a balcony
level. One flight below that is the dance floor. Guests are
wearing suits or jackets.

The room is built for 350, but only 50 people show up. The
music is hot and people are dancing.

JOHN

This look is killin' our rep.

LARRY

Should we try radio?

MEL

No. Radio attracts undesirables. We need our in-crowd. Fewer problems.

JOHN

Let's give it two more weeks. Then we'll know if its gonna work.

MEL

Look around. The people who came are having a great time. Once they tell their friends, we'll get the crowd.

SPENCER

I hate to lose money, so I hope it works that way. I'll take the risk 'cause if it does work...we're in the money.

FADE TO BLACK.

END OF ACT 2

ACT 3

INT. GINZA DANCE FLOOR - NIGHT

"Theme From Shaft", mesmerizes a packed crowd. John, Mel, and Larry watch guests, and Spencer, dance the Penguin.

INT. DJ BOOTH - NIGHT

Charles adjusts levels, searches for the next cut. He dismisses a record then selects another with absolute certainty.

The crowd responds with audible sounds of approval when the music transitions from one record to the next.

INT. GINZA ENTRANCE AREA - NIGHT

TWO WHITE MEN seem out of place. They don't dance or talk. They just observe. Mel notices.

MEL
You know 'em?

JOHN
Not yet...We got eyes on 'em.

Mel nods.

MEL
You find a lawyer for us yet?

JOHN
Mark Schwartz. He's big in Midtown.

LARRY
Shouldn't we hire a brother?

JOHN
We need a lawyer that knows
Midtown. That's Schwartz.
(pause, turning to Mel)
Your flyer is a killer.

Mel pulls a flyer from his jacket pocket. They examine it as if for the first time.

JOHN (CONT'D)
"Midtown After Dark"

MEL

Here's the thing, people feel like
we gave 'em a key to the castle.

LARRY

Our crowd finally feels like they
belong here.

A MALE CUSTOMER jogs down the steps. Larry pulls him aside,
has a private conversation. Their words are inaudible
initially. Then...

MALE CUSTOMER

That's bullshit!

The Male Customer slowly turns and departs up the staircase.

JOHN

What happened?

LARRY

He was packin'.

How'd you know?

LARRY (CONT'D)

I saw the bulge.

JOHN

Damn! You're good.

A white man (50) in a suit enters and approaches John.

FIRE MARSHAL

I'm the Fire Marshal, here to help
keep everyone safe. If you go over
350, I'll shut you down.

JOHN

Understood. We use a clicker.

FIRE MARSHAL

Good.

The Fire Marshal looks around then leaves.

JOHN

They're waiting for us to slip up.

LARRY

Then we won't. We've dealt with
worse than a Fire Marshal.

John leaves the area and returns with JESSICA (F 25, Black).

JOHN

Larry, you heard the Fire Marshal.
We don't need him up our ass.

LARRY

Understood. I also don't wanna get
burnt up, so I'm definitely gonna
keep it within 350.

JOHN

Mel, wanna join me for breakfast at
the Playboy Club? Larry's got the
door and Jessica's got the clicker.

JESSICA

No problem. We got this. Go.

LARRY

Fine. Go. In Nam, when the
lieutenant disappears for
breakfast, we go next. So, I guess
I'm next.

Four beautiful ladies stroll down the steps.

MEL

(whispering)

Good thing you're stuck at the door
'cause I know you'd be all over
that fancy trim.

Larry chuckles. Then he whispers, but the others can hear.

LARRY

You know the difference between
men and women? A woman wants one
man to satisfy her every need. A
man wants every woman to satisfy
his one need.

Mel and John chuckle. Jessica cringes, marches over to Larry.

JESSICA

I hope you have daughters.

EXT. THE GINZA - NIGHT

John and Mel exit the Ginza.

The orderliness inside the Ginza is in contrast to outside:
horns, sirens, police activity, garbage piled high, etc.

As John and Mel stroll along the sidewalk, they notice two WHITE GUYS parked across the street.

MEL

Aren't they the same guys we saw sittin' at the bar?

JOHN

Yeah, we're watchin' 'em...How do you feel about the way things are going overall?

MEL

I'm surprised by the strong response. And the diversity. We get more than just Blacks.

JOHN

Everyone feels welcome.

MEL

I don't have to ask how you feel. It's easy to see that you're lovin' it. But discos won't last forever. It will go away--maybe fast.

JOHN

True, but people will always socialize--just differently.

MEL

What's hard for me is going to work the next morning.

JOHN

Well, help us diversify. Start a business and we'll support you until it gets off the ground.

MEL

I just got another promotion. That's more responsibilities.

JOHN

Congrats! You got business experience. You know we need you, right?

John glances back: the Ginza is alive. The car--still there.

INT. GINZA - NIGHT

Spencer marches over to Larry and Jessica at the entrance.

SPENCER
You guys are good?

LARRY
Yeah, we're good.

SPENCER
I'm gonna take a quick spin around
the floor. Be back in a few.

Instead of checking out the dance area, Spencer moves quickly to an office in the rear, where he quietly examines TBOF books. He pauses on a specific page, looks up, stares into space, deep in thought.

INT. CHARLES' PARENT'S HOUSE - NIGHT

A freshly renovated basement. Clean. Comfortable. New couches, chairs, TV, coffee table.

John, Mel, Charles, Larry, Spencer - settle in.

LARRY
Nice basement.

CHARLES
My parents love it.

JOHN
Good to hear.

MRS. TERRY enters with a pitcher.

MRS. TERRY
Anyone want lemonade?

A chorus of "Yes ma'am". Mrs. Terry pours, they sip.

MEL
We should have ALL our meetings
here. The lemonade alone...

Laughter. Mrs. Terry exits.

John stands.

JOHN
Alright. Listen up.

They settle. John drops a stack of papers on the table.

JOHN (CONT'D)

We're official now--The Best of
Friends, Inc. with corporate bank
accounts.

Charles quietly hands out his financial report.

After seeing the numbers, Spencer shifts, impatient.

SPENCER

What the fuck. Lotta cash is comin'
in--why can't we save some for
construction and pay ourselves a
real salary too?

JOHN

If we come up short mid-build
(leans in)
we don't recover.

SPENCER

The allowance we're gettin' is off
the books. Although it's small,
it's illegal. If the IRS finds out,
we could go to jail.

Silence. John studies Spencer for a moment.

JOHN

We're ending allowances. We need to
save money to build discos.
Eventually, we'll all get proper
salaries.

(pause)

I hired an accountant. He works
with Schwartz, our lawyer. We're
now fully legit. No more shortcuts.
No bullshit. Otherwise, that's how
they get us.

Nods of agreement. Then--

LARRY

How can we help?

John stands taller.

JOHN

Focus on your strengths.
Charles--money and music.
Mel--marketing. Larry--construction.
(looks at Spencer)
Spencer...?

SPENCER

My strength is havin' a good time.

Spencer grins. A few chuckles. Not from John.

CHARLES

The crowd's changing. The music's bigger than the Ginza.

MEL

We're leaving money on the table every Thursday.

JOHN

Rapid expansion can kill a business as fast as failure.

Charles taps his financial report.

CHARLES

Take a moment to check this out.

They scan.

JOHN

The numbers look great.

MEL

Dances can't do that.

Mel, Larry, and Spencer start to stand up.

CHARLES

Don't leave. We gotta count.

He drops bundles of cash on the table. The room quiets.

They start counting. Larry examines his stack and shakes his head in disbelief.

Charles pulls John into an adjacent room.

INT. ADJACENT ROOM

(Low voices)

CHARLES

When Spencer's on the door, the numbers dip.

John doesn't respond.

CHARLES (CONT'D)

Not a lot. Just enough to notice.
I've been watching it for three
weeks. I wanted to be sure before I
said anything.

Through the cracked door, Spencer catches John's eyes.
Spencer knows.

EXT./INT./EXT. COPACABANA - NIGHT

John and Cheryl stroll down 51st Street to the Copacabana,
whose marquee reads "The Temptations and The Four Tops".

CHERYL

This is exciting! We need to do
this more often.

JOHN

(with little enthusiasm)
I'll work on it.

They enter the club and are shown a table in the middle of
the room. As they look around, John spots Cheryl's friend.

JOHN (CONT'D)

Isn't that Robin?

CHERYL

Yeah!

JOHN

Who's she with?

CHERYL

Frank Matthews.

JOHN

Oh shit! He's all over the news.
He's out on bail.

A WAITER comes over to John.

WAITER

Sir, we're moving you down front.

A table is wheeled in with four chairs and white table cloth.

Two bottles of Dom Perignon and four glasses are set up. A
waiter escorts John and Cheryl to the new table.

ROBIN (F 25, Black) and FRANK MATTHEWS (M 27, Black) join them. Frank wears an expensive red sports jacket, like he wants to be seen. Robin is dressed to the nines.

Nearby guests subtly stare at Frank. The waiter is overly attentive. Frank shakes John's hand. The waiter pours.

FRANK

I hear you run a disco at the
Ginza. Heard it's good.

JOHN

Thanks Frank. You're always welcome
at the Ginza.
(then quieter)
As my guest.

John forces a smile, which drops when Frank turns away. John raises his glass and the others join in.

JOHN (CONT'D)

Here's to friendship.

CHERYL

Robin, beautiful earrings!

ROBIN

Thanks. Frank bought them for me.
It matches my ring, see?

Robin raises her hand with an expensive looking ring. John notices Cheryl admiring Cheryl's jewelry.

VOICE OF GOD

Ladies and gentlemen, direct from
Motown, The Four Tops!

At the end of the show, Frank turns to John and Cheryl.

FRANK

John, I'm going to a cool after-
hours club. Join me as my guest.

CHERYL

Sounds great! Let's go John.

JOHN

Thanks, thanks, Frank. I, I can't.
They're expecting me at the Ginza.

FRANK

You're gonna miss the fun.

Frank laughs--too loud. Heads turn. John notices.

The waiter gives Frank the check. Frank struggles to get a huge wad of cash from his pants pocket. When he gets the right amount on the table, he struggles to return the wad.

All four stroll toward the exit.

JOHN

Thanks, Frank. We had a great time.

FRANK

I'll stop by the Ginza. Soon.

EXT. SIDEWALK IN FRONT OF COPACABANA - NIGHT

The couples exit the Copa.

JOHN

Certainly, I know you'll have a good time. Good night folks.

John and Cheryl turn and stroll away.

EXT. SIDEWALK NEAR THE COPACABANA - NIGHT

CHERYL

You seemed nervous when Frank invited you to an after-hours club. You know you could've gone. Why'd you turn him down?

JOHN

He attracts danger. You never know, shoot-outs, FBI, police, and so on.

CHERYL

But you invited him to the Ginza, so you're not that afraid, right?

JOHN

I don't say no to a man like that.

CHERYL

Well, I hope Robin will be okay. She loves bling too much.

FADE TO BLACK.

END OF ACT 3

ACT 4

INT. GINZA - NIGHT

Larry is at the bottom of the staircase collecting the admission fee. John, Mel, and Spencer stand nearby.

Derrick jogs down the steps.

DERRICK

Hey everybody! Good to see y'all!

Larry smiles and waves him in without collecting the entrance fee. Derrick leans over to John.

DERRICK (CONT'D)

(whispers)

I love your operation. You created a great environment. I'd love an opportunity to be part of this. I'm a good manager.

JOHN

I'll keep you in mind.

Derrick jogs down to the dance floor.

MEL

How come you didn't charge him?

JOHN

You know Derrick. Haven't you seen what he does? Come, I'll show ya.

John and Mel head downstairs.

A hot disco beat is blasting. Dancers are fully engaged.

John and Mel see Derrick shaking hands with "New York" Eddie Friar, a well-known drug kingpin. They exchange a few words.

Then Derrick wades into the crowd playing his tambourine.

Dancers put more energy into their steps and start chanting.

DANCERS

"Whoop! Whoop!"

Derrick blows a whistle. Dancers' steps get even higher and turns more crisp as they become more conscious of each other.

RANDOM DANCER 1
Go, Harry, go!

RANDOM DANCER 2
Do it, Val! Do it to it!

John and Mel head upstairs to the entrance area where Larry is collecting the admission fee.

INT. GINZA ENTRANCE AREA - NIGHT

JOHN
Gentlemen: We need to be careful about how we run through women. When you fuck 'em and leave 'em, they don't come around anymore. I'm talking primarily to you two.

John looks at Spencer and Larry.

SPENCER
I don't chase women away--that's not what I do. Anyway, I'm only aware of Marsha not coming back. Maybe she moved.

JOHN
What about Carmen and Beverly? You guys gotta do better.

LARRY
I hear you. Won't happen anymore.

Spencer avoids eye contact and looks away. He starts to say something, changes his mind, and turns away.

THREE ATTRACTIVE WOMEN glide down the stairs. Mel's eye locks onto one of them. She has a large Afro, easy smile, and a sexy halter top. She has a natural, wholesome look.

Their eyes meet. Both stare. Everything else fades into the background. Short, shallow breaths.

MEL
Larry - take over the door, please.

LARRY
Sure. I assume it's important.

Mel hands the money box to Larry and runs to catch up to the attractive lady before she disappears downstairs.

LARRY (CONT'D)

John, has Mel done this before?

JOHN

You mean give up the money? Never.
I saw how he looked at that girl.

INT. GINZA, BAR AREA - NIGHT

Mel approaches the young lady near the stairs.

MEL

Hi. I just wanted to introduce
myself. I'm Mel. What's your name?

Before she can answer, Mel pulls her hair.

CAROL

(shocked, raised voice)
Why'd you pull my hair? Are you
crazy?!!

MEL

Sorry. Just wanted to see if your
Afro was real.

CAROL

Of course it is! Don't ever do that
again!

MEL

Sorry, I'm sorry. I just need to
say somethin'. Can we talk for a
moment? What's your name?

CAROL

Wait a minute. You pull my hair,
and then hit on me? I'll give you
credit for havin' a lotta nerve.

MEL

I do, but it's because I think
you're fabulous.

CAROL

Flattery does help...Carol. My name
is Carol Diaz.

MEL

Nice to meet you, Carol. Let me buy
you a drink. It's a little easier
to talk at the bar.

INT. BAR AREA AT THE GINZA - NIGHT

Mel leads Carol to the bar.

CAROL

I saw you at the door. You're part
of The Best of Friends, right?

Carol and Mel sit at the far end of the bar.

MEL

You know about The Best of Friends?

CAROL

Sure. All my New York peeps at
Hampton know about The Best of
Friends. But, I'm back in New York
for good now. I just transferred to
Queens College.

MEL

QC is my alma mater! Class of '68.
Why'd you transfer?

CAROL

We took over a building to protest
the Viet Nam war, so President
Hudson shut down the college and
kicked everybody out.

MEL

Wow! You're an activist. So, what
are you doin' now?

CAROL

Taking night classes and working as
a receptionist in Midtown. That way
I can study during the day.

MEL

I work in Midtown too. How about
lunch? You can pick the restaurant.

CAROL

Maybe. You like lobsters?

MEL

Never had 'em.

CAROL

If you wanna do lunch, find a
restaurant that serves lobsters.
I'll show you how to eat 'em.

MEL
I'll need your phone number.

Mel hands Carol his book.

CAROL
Thanks.

Carol writes her info so large, it fills the entire page.

MEL
There was room for three names on that page. Why'd you write so big?

CAROL
Because it'll be easier for you to find me. We're both busy.

MEL
When I saw you walking down the stairs, I had a feeling you were special. Now that we've met, I see you are. I like your energy.

CAROL
Thank you.

MEL
And when you walk, it's almost like your body is dancin'.

CAROL
You're gettin' carried away now.

MEL
No, I'm serious...Hey, I gotta get back to the door.

Mel tries to kiss Carol on the cheek, she quickly moves away.

CAROL
That's for pulling my hair.

MEL
You're tough, Carol. I really am sorry...Love your perfume.

CAROL
Chanel #5.

Mel smiles back at Carol.

MEL
Hell of a brand.

INT. GINZA ENTRANCE AREA - NIGHT

As guests file out at the end of the night, several dance the Penguin up the stairs and out onto 58th Street.

John, Mel, and Larry are at the entrance area.

MEL

It's 4 AM and look at the crowd.

LARRY

Nobody wants the night to end when
the music is hot.

John smiles. The last patrons file out.

Larry heads downstairs to the empty dance floor. Quiet.
Serene. No hint of the high energy that was there earlier.

Larry parades slowly around the dance floor, absorbing the
success of the night. His mind contrasts images of dancers
vs. the horrors of war he witnessed in Viet Nam.

INT. YOUNG & RUBICAM CONFERENCE ROOM - DAY

The Remington BRAND MANAGER is presenting plans for the year.

Mel's eyes close and he nods off. The senior EXECUTIVES for
Remington notice, as do others, including Cliff.

After the presentation, Mel heads back to his impressive
private office. Cliff enters right behind Mel.

CLIFF

Mel, you got a problem I need to
know about?

MEL

No, no. I'm fine. I just had a
rough night. Won't happen again.

CLIFF

What you do when you leave here is
on you. But if it affects your
work...You can't nod off like that.

MEL

It won't happen again. Here's the
thing, this job is my priority.

CLIFF

We'll see.

Cliff leaves Mel's office. Mel slaps himself in the face.

MEL

Shit!

INT. GINZA ENTRANCE AREA - NIGHT

John and Mel are handling the admissions area.

MEL

Word is out. The lines are growing.
Let's go to La Martinique.

JOHN

One bad night can close a business
forever. I'd rather add more nights
here at the Ginza.

MEL

La Martinique would take us to
another level.

JOHN

We're still trying to establish
ourselves. Why take the chance? We
can put it to a vote if you like.

MEL

No need. We both know the guys will
support whatever you say.

Mel walks away. John, lost in thought, leans against the
wall. As disco music soars, Spencer moseys over.

SPENCER

We're good?

JOHN

I knew we would be.

The O'Jays' "Backstabber" is playing. Spencer studies John. A
beat goes by where Spencer could say something, but doesn't.

Spencer heads back toward the bar and disappears into the
crowd. John takes a step forward.

Jessica runs down the steps to John.

JESSICA

A white guy named Vincent is asking
for you--by name.

John rushes upstairs.

EXT. THE GINZA - NIGHT

John strokes his mustache and approaches two well-dressed men. VINCENT (M 40, white) is clearly in charge. The OTHER MAN (30s, white) is powerfully built. John addresses Vincent.

JOHN
You wanna see me?

VINCENT
Come take a ride.

Vincent's sidekick opens the car door.

JOHN
I, I can't leave now. I got people
comin'. W-what is this about?

VINCENT
We have several clubs. You bring in
your crowd one night a week. We
take the bar. Everybody wins.

JOHN
I'd have to see the clubs first.

VINCENT
That's why we wanted you to get in
the car. How about Thursday? 11pm?

JOHN
Okay, I can do that.

Vincent and his partner leave. John runs back downstairs.

INT. GINZA ENTRANCE AREA - NIGHT

John calls Mel, Charles, and Larry over.

JOHN
I'm going out with Vincent Thursday
night. If I don't come back after a
few hours, come lookin' for me.

LARRY
You shouldn't go. But if you do,
and you disappear, we'll assume the
worst. No sense in the rest of us
gettin' disappeared

Larry Chuckles. John smiles.

LARRY (CONT'D)
But, seriously, that's a bad ride.

JOHN
I'm going.

LARRY
I'll give it two hours before I
come looking. In Nam, that's how
long we waited before we assumed
the worst.

CHARLES
I'll go too. It'll reduce the risk.

John nods slowly and strolls off with Charles.

LARRY
(whispers to Mel)
If anything happens to John, our
ass is grass.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. GINZA ENTRANCE AREA - NIGHT

John, Mel, and Larry are in the admissions area. Jessica jogs
down the steps to John.

JESSICA
John, Vincent is waiting upstairs.

JOHN
Get Charles.

When Charles arrives, they march up the steps to Vincent.

VINCENT
Who's your friend?

JOHN
Charles, one of my partners.

VINCENT
Okay, this here is Luke.

The four head toward a stretch limousine. John and Charles
nervously climb in. John strokes his mustache.

CUT TO:

EXT./INT. STREET SCENES IN THE EAST VILLAGE - NIGHT

The limo pulls up to a storefront. Patrons are dressed casually: jeans, few jackets.

VINCENT

John, before you comment, I'd like you to see all four clubs.

JOHN

Okay.

Visual montage of all four underwhelming clubs: All are downscale juice bars, casual, with mostly white patrons.

INT. INSIDE VINCENT'S LIMO - NIGHT

VINCENT

What d'ya think?

John pulls his mustache, pauses, and takes a deep breath.

JOHN

Your clubs are different than what we do. You got juice bars. Our crowd likes drinks. Thanks but it wouldn't work for us.

CHARLES

Those clubs are losing money. Whoever owns them needs the cash flow, not a partnership.

VINCENT

(snide tone)

Thanks for that insight.

(pause)

I like you guys. I was hoping you could make it work. I'll think of something else. Call me if you change your mind.

Vincent hands a card to John.

LUKE

You know this is important to us?

JOHN

I understand.

Vincent holds his hand up to Luke to stop talking.

JOHN (CONT'D)
Thanks for making us aware of this opportunity.

CHARLES
Yes, thank you gentlemen.

EXT./INT. THE GINZA ENTRANCE AREA - NIGHT

Vincent's limo pulls up in front of the Ginza. John and Charles jump out and hustle down the stairs to Mel.

MEL
How'd it go?

JOHN
Don't know. They showed us juice bars. Vincent might be with the mob. If so, this could go bad fast.

MEL
Sounds like you handled it well. When our people buy drinks, they're really buying status...I'm surprised they don't have liquor licenses.

CHARLES
Also, the music wasn't cuttin' it...I'll be in the booth.

Charles leaves. Larry joins John and Mel.

JOHN
If Vincent is in the mob, he's part of the Genovese family.

MEL
Didn't Genovese die?

JOHN
Yeah, in prison. That might make Matty "The Horse" more powerful.

John steps away.

LARRY
Midtown doesn't want us. And Vinnie's clubs...Can't win for losin'.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. ORPHEUS - NIGHT

Despite the shooting, Orpheus opens for the night. John and Mel are near the entrance when DETECTIVE GRANGER arrives.

DETECTIVE GRANGER
I'm detective Granger. I got a few
questions for John Latimore.

John and Mel escort Detective Granger to an office.

INT. ORPHEUS OFFICE - NIGHT

MEL
You always work this late?

DETECTIVE GRANGER
Late is when most crime happens.
How long have you had this club?

JOHN
Three months.

DETECTIVE GRANGER
Is business good?

JOHN
Yes, we're doing well.

DETECTIVE GRANGER
Are you affecting nearby clubs?

JOHN
We're not puttin' anybody outta
business, if that's what you mean.

DETECTIVE GRANGER
Do you know anyone who would want
you, or Derrick, out of the way?

JOHN
No. We work hard to maintain good
relations with everyone.

DETECTIVE GRANGER
Who can tell me more about Derrick?

JOHN
Speak to Emma, his wife.

DETECTIVE GRANGER
This wasn't a robbery. Any ideas?

JOHN
Nope. No idea.

DETECTIVE GRANGER
You need to be careful, John. We
put extra patrols in this area.
Call me if you think of anything.

Detective Granger hands John his card and leaves.

INT. ORPHEUS - DAY
Super: THE NEXT DAY

John stands where Derrick's lifeless body lay earlier. Blood
is gone, but not the memory.

As John visualizes the scene from last night, a knock on the
door snaps him out of it. John opens the door.

DETECTIVE GRANGER
I got new information.

JOHN
Come in.

John and Detective Granger remain standing.

DETECTIVE GRANGER
The shooting wasn't random.
(beat)
It came from your side.

JOHN
No. No way.

END OF EPISODE ONE