

~ THE ROAD ~

EPISODE THREE: BUDAPEST

He who makes a beast of himself  
gets rid of the pain of being a man

By

Lanny Cordola

and

Shawn Perry

© Lanny Cordola & Shawn Perry

FADE IN:

INT. DARK SOUNDSTAGE - NIGHT

The set is modeled on a Moroccan bizarre with beads, tapestries, and other North African accoutrements.

A Hungarian gypsy ensemble called BRATSCH plays the song, "Rien Dans Les Poches."

ANGLE ON

THE SINGER MITSOU.

She is petite, dark beauty. She sings like a Carmelite nun after experiencing divine revelation.

The song continues to play.

THE CAMERA PANS TO THE BACK OF MR. E.

MR. E sits motionless in a chair as his hair blows back. He listens intently.

The camera angles back to BRATSCH.

C.U. MITSOU

C.U MR. E

They are deep in musical communion.

The song finishes.

MR. E stands, turns and looks directly into the camera.

In one full motion, he raises his hands vertically in front of his face, and brings his hands together as in prayer.

CUT TO:

MONTAGE

RANDOM INDIVIDUALS (FRIENDS, FOES, FANS, AND FREAKS) OFFER UP BRIEF TESTIMONIALS ON MR. E.

CRITIC

A musical iconoclast.

COLLEGE PROFESSOR

A cultural plagiarist.

MAN IN A LONG WHITE ROBE  
A visionary.

DISTANT ACQUAINTANCE  
A dupe.

GREASE MONKEY  
A dope.

HIPPIE CHICK  
A guru.

DRUNK MAN  
(Slurring)  
A drunk.

BARTENDER  
(Wiping a glass)  
A very decent tipper.

WHIMSICAL ACTRESS  
A poet.

PORNO ACTRESS  
Delicious.

FEMINIST  
A philanderer.

FREEDOM ROCKER  
A philosopher.

AN OLD ITALIAN PROSTITUTE  
When he was here, he was there. And  
when he was there, He was  
everywhere. Capiche?

YOUNG PROSTITUTE  
He's the most passionate man I've  
ever met. God knows he loved them  
all, even the ugly ones.

SNOB  
Pretentious.

PSYCHOLOGIST  
Complex.

THEOLOGIAN  
We've had several conversations  
about God and theology.  
(MORE)

THEOLOGIAN (cont'd)

From what I gather, he seems to gravitate towards the Kierkegaardian/Dostoyevskian aspects of Christianity. But then again, he could be Jungian Buddhist.

OLD GIRLFRIEND

A bastard.

GEEK

A misanthrope.

SOPHISTICATED BRITISH WOMAN

A solipsist.

RODNEY BINGENHEIMER

An erotic politician.

TEAM MASCOT

A somnambulist.

PUNK

An anarchist.

MAINTENANCE MAN

A pacifist.

NUN

(Smirks)

A devil.

A DIFFERENT NUN

A saint.

WASTED VALLEY DUDE

He's fucking awesome.

BRIGHT-EYED BABE

Full of life.

GOTH CHICK

Full of death.

DEBBIE HARRY

Full of shit.

OLD MAN

He's nothing but a bum.

(Pauses)

Wait a minute, who are you talking about?

COUPLE IN COWBOY HATS AND MATCHING  
RHINESTONE OUTFITS

(In unison)

He's no Kenny Wayne McClintock.

COUPLE OF TOURISTS IN LAS VEGAS

(In unison)

He's no Fig Newton.

OLD WOMAN

He's no good.

ROADIE

A hero.

COP

A villain.

BARBERSHOP QUARTET

(Sings)

Yes, he has no bananas! He has no  
bananas today...

SHADOW MARTIN

A screaming mimi.

TRUE LOVE

The most lonely man alone.

END OF MONTAGE

CUT TO:

INT. HOTEL TORONTO CONFERENCE ROOM - DAY

FLASHBACK

SHOT IN GRAINY BLACK AND WHITE

MR. E sits alone before a row of microphones, fielding  
questions from the press.

REPORTER #1

Are you a misogynist?

MR. E

I've always considered misogyny  
vulgar and simple-minded. For the  
most part, I've tried to live  
harmoniously in the company of  
women.

(MORE)

MR. E (cont'd)  
 It's too bad that pride and boredom  
 end up destroying the sacred part  
 of the male-female dynamic.

REPORTER #2  
 What motivates you?

MR. E  
 Darkness. To some day know what it  
 is and annihilate it.

REPORTER #3  
 Would you consider yourself a  
 violent person?

MR. E  
 I would consider all men violent.  
 It's in our nature. Men are  
 constantly at war with each  
 other...with God...  
 (With love)  
 ...hell, we're even at war with  
 ourselves most of the time.

REPORTER #4  
 You once said you felt a deep  
 kinship with the Marquis De Sade.

MR. E  
 Yes, it's true. Inebriants and  
 women have been my companions for  
 many a moon. But as the spirit  
 dies, the mind and body awaken.  
 Angry and out for blood. The road  
 of excess leading to the palace of  
 wisdom. I found a heap of grace in  
 the grips of profound melancholy.  
 The Spaniards call it *duende*. Deep  
 ecstasy followed by mortal dread.

REPORTER #2  
 What are your thoughts on God?

END OF FLASHBACK

CUT TO:

OPENING CREDITS

"Dark Souls" by Djavan Jasparyan and Michael Brook plays.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. - PRAGUE CENTRAL RAILWAY STATION (HLAVNI NADRAZI) - DAY

Through a barren haze of fog and steam, a train breaks the stillness, blasting billows of smoke with great force.

The train is en route to BUDAPEST, a seven-hour trip.

CUT TO:

MR. E sits alone in the dining car. He's just finished eating a hearty sampling of Indian curie and chicken vindaloo.

A crumpled newspaper lies nearby, its headlines alluding to MR. E's supposed indiscretions with PENELOPE, DILEK and BJORK.

MR. E smirks at the headline and nurses a cocktail. He glances out the window at the passing countryside and falls asleep.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. A DARK HOTEL ROOM IN JERUSALEM - NIGHT

FLASHBACK

MR. E and SUZANNE lay on a bed, almost motionless. A lone candle dwindles and flickers on a nearby nightstand.

MR. E

I struggle to grasp the enormity and mystery of God when so much pettiness and stupidity cloud the juggernaut of my thoughts.

SUZANNE

Why do you feel the need to box God into your thoughts when God surrounds us with so much beauty and love and imagination...

MR. E

...And war and decay and death.

SUZANNE

Those are man's inventions, not God's. Man left to his own designs is perverse, vile and arrogant. Always at war with ideology, religion, property and the illusion of security. But most of all, man's at war with himself.

(MORE)

SUZANNE (cont'd)  
 He despises himself and  
 subconsciously curses the day he  
 was born.

MR. E  
 Why is that?

SUZANNE  
 Because man's capacity for thought  
 is finite and God's is infinite.

MR. E  
 (Taken aback)  
 How do you know all this?

SUZANNE  
 The joyful noise of silence. It is  
 the glory of the God to conceal a  
 matter and the glory of kings to  
 seek them out.

There's a knock at the door.

MR. E gets up and approaches the door.

As he opens the door, three men (a MUSLIM, JEW, and HINDU)  
 enter, each carrying instruments. They take their positions  
 and begin to play an elegant instrumental piece.

The MUSLIM plays a duduk, the JEW plays a clarinet, and the  
 HINDU plays a sitar. The music is adversarial, then  
 harmonious, yet difficult.

As they continue to play, they began chanting John Coltrane's  
 "A Love Supreme"...

MUSLIM, JEW, AND HINDU  
 (In unison)  
 A love supreme, a love supreme, a  
 love supreme...

CUT TO:

STOCK SHOT - WAR FOOTAGE

MR. E  
 (V.O.)  
 These are not issues; they are  
 states of emergency.  
 (Pauses)  
 The holocaust. Genocide.

INSERT

RANDOM FOOTAGE OF WAR-TORN EUROPE DURING WORLD WAR II.

MR. E  
(V.O.)  
Ethnic cleansing.

INSERT

RANDOM WAR FOOTAGE OF THE BALKANS IN THE 80S AND 90S.

MR. E  
(V.O.)  
The killing fields.

INSERT

RANDOM FOOTAGE AND PHOTOGRAPHS OF CAMBODIA EMBROILED IN  
GENOCIDE IN THE 70S.

MR. E  
(V.O.)  
The Crusades.

INSERT

PAINTING OF THE FIRST CRUSADE IN JERUSALEM IN 1099.

MR. E  
(V.O.)  
Jihad.

INSERT

RANDOM FOOTAGE AND PHOTOGRAPHS OF RIOTING, TERRORISM AND WAR  
IN THE MIDDLE EAST CIRCA 2002-04.

MR. E  
(V.O.)  
Wounded Knee.

INSERT

PAINTING OF THE MASSACRE AT WOUNDED KNEE ON DECEMBER 29,  
1890.

MR. E  
(V.O.)  
The My Lai Massacre.

INSERT

RANDOM FOOTAGE AND PHOTOGRAPHS OF THE MY LAI MASSACRE ON  
MARCH 16, 1968.

MR. E  
(V.O.)  
The rape of Nanking.

INSERT

RANDOM FOOTAGE AND PHOTOGRAPHS OF NANKING, CHINA IN 1937-38.

MR. E  
(V.O.)  
911.

INSERT

RANDOM FOOTAGE AND PHOTOGRAPHS OF THE WORLD TRADE CENTER (NEW  
YORK CITY) AND PENTAGON (WASHINGTON, D.C.) ON SEPTEMBER 11,  
2001.

MR. E  
(V.O.)  
Hiroshima and Nagasaki.

INSERT

RANDOM FOOTAGE AND PHOTOGRAPHS OF HIROSHIMA AND NAGASAKI ON  
AUGUST 6-9, 1945.

MR. E  
(V.O.)  
Communism. Socialism. Fascism.  
Dogmatism. Fanaticism. Racism.  
Creationism. Darwinism. Capitalism.  
Lifeism. Deathism. Bagism.  
Terrorism.

INSERT

RANDOM STOCK FOOTAGE AND PHOTOGRAPHS OF GENERAL RIOTING AND  
PROTESTING FROM AROUND THE WORLD.

MR. E  
(V.O.)  
There's a simple beauty that lives  
between the shadow and the soul. If  
you look hard enough, you can get a  
glimpse.

END OF FLASHBACK

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. MR. E'S SUITE IN PRAGUE - DAY

TRUE LOVE stands in the doorway.

POV TRUE LOVE:

He sees a broken mirror and bloodstains.

He also sees a tabloid with a headline about MR. E.

TRUE LOVE  
Here we go again...

CUT TO:

INT. 'JOHN THE BAPTIST' CAVE, NEAR JERUSALEM - NIGHT

There are several lit candles strewn about the cave.

MR. E stands before HORACE GRAETTINGER and FATHER MERTON.

FATHER MERTON  
Art is the grandchild of God. It  
was God's intention that man should  
live by nature and his own art.

HORACE GRAETTINGER unleashes a sinister laugh.

GRAETTINGER  
Your ignorance is so full of, shall  
we say...balderdash.

FATHER MERTON  
Just because you have some kind of  
understanding of minor seconds and  
dissonance does not allow you to  
regale in blasphemous  
recalcitrance.

GRAETTINGER  
(Sarcastically)  
What are your thoughts, Edward?

MR. E  
(Muses for a moment)  
You're a whole different person  
when you're scared.

CUT TO:

EXT. THE BUDAPEST EXPRESS - DAY

The train pulls into its destination.

MR. E awakes from his slumber and realizes he's in Budapest.

As he disembarks the train and walks through the train station, MR. E passes by an apparition of HUNTER S. THOMPSON, who sits casually, smoking a cigarette.

Out of nowhere, a man who may or may not be JOHNNY DEPP approaches MR. E.

They examine each other in silence and mutual admiration.

JOHNNY DEPP

I am here to give you the lexicon  
of the late, great, apostate --  
Hunter S. Thompson.

(Pauses)

Psychotic, manic, maniac,  
depraved, fear and loathing,  
decadent, gonzo, weird, fanatic,  
rabid, swoop, beast, horror, mumbo  
jumbo, menace, bamboozled, bizarre,  
hoodlum...

INSERT

RANDOM BIZARRE DRAWINGS AND CARTOONS ALA RALPH STEADMAN AND  
R. CRUMB.

JOHNNY DEPP

...Lewd and lascivious, swine,  
grim, whore hopper, bedlam, outlaw,  
cruelty, perversion, sinister,  
freaks, Nazi penetration,  
treachery, paranoia, hyena,  
cannibal, boondoggle, rage,  
hysteria and suckfish...

(Pauses)

He who makes a beast of himself  
gets rid of the pain of being a  
man.

JOHNNY DEPP turns on his heel and walks away.

MR. E smiles and then continues on.

As MR. E walks out of the station, he passes by a TRAPPIST MONK (JUDE CAIN) with a dirty face, dark glasses, and a hood covering his head sitting on a bench. The MONK raises his head and smiles as MR. E exits the station.

CUT TO:

EXT. LOADING AREA - CONTINUOUS

MR. E takes in his surroundings and conspicuously flags down a taxi.

Moments later, a taxi rolls up and MR. E gets in.

MR. E  
(To TAXI DRIVER)  
You speak English?

TAXI DRIVER  
Si senior.

MR. E laughs.

MR. E  
Where can a guy get lost in this town?

The TAXI DRIVER smiles, his crusty gold teeth gleaming.

TAXI DRIVER  
I know a place.

FADE OUT

EXT. JERUSALEM - DAY

FLASHBACK

MR. E and SUZANNE walk hand in hand through the narrow corridors of Via Dolorosa. Although it is normally packed with visitors and pilgrims, the streets are virtually empty save for a small group of Palestinian kids watching the Israeli police searching some Palestinian transients. The sound of a cello slowly fades in...

CROSS-FADE

INT. A DARK ROOM - NIGHT

A lone shadow sweeps across the screen and suddenly a silhouette of SUZANNE appears, playing the cello.

The music continues to play...

C.U. OF SUZANNE PLAYING THE CELLO.

MR. E

(V.O.)

To see or hear a cello in your subconscious represents sensual and creative exhibitions of strength and stability.

The music continues to play...

C.U. OF CELLO AND THE BOW SCRAPPING ACROSS THE STRINGS.

MR. E

(V.O.)

The cello is a submarine, an architect of sound.

(Pauses)

The shape of a cello represents both the male and female. The lower structural form celebrates the feminine, while the utilization of the bow is the sublimation of stroking a torso.

The music continues to play...

C.U. OF SUZANNE STRADDLING THE CELLO.

MR. E

(V.O.)

A famous psychiatrist, who shall remain nameless, once said the very act of playing a cello could cause great sexual tension in a musician. The music stops abruptly.

SUZANNE pouts and looks directly into the camera.

C.U. OF SUZANNE'S FACE.

MR. E

(V.O.)

I'm inclined to agree.

A bead of sweat trickles from SUZANNE's brow.

The music continues to play.

THE CAMERA CIRCLES AROUND SUZANNE AS SHE PASSIONATELY ATTACKS THE CELLO.

MR. E

(V.O.)

The visual and tonal beauty of the cello demands attention. It isn't something that should be left in a corner, gathering dust. It needs a player to sing, to shout its message...a message of timeless exaltation...

The music continues to play...

THE CAMERA PANS ACROSS THE CELLO.

INTERCUT

SUZANNE'S INTENSE, SERENE EXPRESSION.

MR. E

(V.O.)

Bach wrote his St. Matthew Passion concerto for God.

(Pauses)

But I believe he wrote his sacred cello cantatas for the erogenous zone.

SUZANNE stops playing and smiles demurely as she looks directly into the camera.

FADE TO:

INT. A DARK HOTEL ROOM IN JERUSALEM - CONTINUOUS

MR. E and SUZANNE sit on a couch, almost motionless. A lone candle dwindles and flickers on a nearby table. Smoke lingers overhead.

MR. E

Where do you come from?

SUZANNE

(Turns her head slowly)

The Greek Island of Hydra.

MR. E

What about your family?

SUZANNE

My father is a musician and my mother is director of documentary films.

MR. E  
So, what nationality are you?

SUZANNE  
I'm Greek and Jewish.

MR. E  
And how did you end up in  
Jerusalem?

SUZANNE  
I came to study the Talmud with a  
old Jewish mystic.

MR. E  
(Taken aback and smiles)  
What else have you studied?

SUZANNE  
I studied Zoroastrianism in Baku and  
the Bible with a group Mennonites  
outside Copenhagen.

MR. E  
Do you speak Greek?

SUZANNE  
Yes. I also speak Hebrew, a bit of  
Arabic, and some Danish.

MR. E  
Mmmm...most of us Americans can  
barely stumble through English.

SUZANNE  
Why do you think that is?

MR. E  
I guess it's a combination of  
ignorance, arrogance and hubris.

SUZANNE  
Do you speak any other languages?

MR. E  
(Smiles)  
I can say 'hello' and 'goodbye' in  
42 native tongues. I also dream in  
Italian, swear in French,  
contemplate in Swahili, and  
meditate in Japanese.

SUZANNE laughs.

SUZANNE  
And where are YOU from?

MR. E  
(Looks up sheepishly)  
Me?

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. LOS ANGELES INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT (LAX) - DAY

"Los Angeles" by Benjamin Biolay fades in.

THE CAMERA PULLS BACK AND PANS ACROSS THE FAA BUILDING AND ENCOUNTER RESTAURANT.

MR. E and SUZANNE emerge from the tarmac and out onto the terminal, luggage in hand.

MR. E hails a taxi.

A taxi pulls up and they get in.

MR. E  
(V.O.)  
Los Angeles is a breeding ground for dreamers who refuse to give up, a wasteland for the demented and disillusioned, a playground for the rich and spoiled, an overpopulated cocoon on its last legs. It's my home and I'm always happy to be back.

As the taxi travels to its destination, we glimpse a montage of familiar Los Angeles landmarks.

MONTAGE

THE CAPITOL RECORDS TOWER, THE HOLLYWOOD ROOSEVELT HOTEL, THE HOLLYWOOD SIGN, THE CHATEAU MARMONT, THE HOLLYWOOD BOWL, ETC.

MR. E  
(V.O.)  
Frank Lloyd Wright, the famous architect, once said: "Turn the world over on its side and everything loose will land in Los Angeles." There's no doubt in my mind some of the most illogical and nomadic miscreants to ever walk the earth eventually settle here.

(MORE)

MR. E (cont'd)  
 And even though I'm a native, I  
 often feel like one of them.

MR. E points out various sights to SUZANNE from the taxi.

MR. E  
 (V.O.)  
 In Los Angeles, the bulk of  
 humanity wears a mask. A mask of  
 fear, a mask of indignance,  
 ignorance, subterfuge. Underneath  
 the mask, however, is where the  
 poetry lies.

SPEEDED-UP MOTION

DAY TURNS TO NIGHT

MONTAGE

TRAFFIC, CITY LIGHTS, CROWDS ON SIDEWALKS, TOURISTS, GANG  
 MEMBERS, POLICEMEN, PUNKS, STREET WALKERS, STRUGGLING  
 MUSICIANS, STRUGGLING ACTORS, ATHLETES, BUSINESSMEN, TRUCK  
 DRIVERS, FAST FOOD WORKERS, POSTAL WORKERS, FIRE FIGHTERS,  
 UTILITY WORKERS, ETC.

MR. E  
 (V.O.)  
 Los Angeles, city of myths.  
 Phantasmagorias, phrase mongers,  
 swamis, desperados under the eaves.

INSERT

PHOTOGRAPH OF WARREN ZEVON.

MR. E  
 (V.O.)  
 Nathaniel West, Charles Bukowski,  
 Ray Bradbury, Charles Manson,  
 Raymond Chandler, Joan Didion.  
 Niggas with attitude. Heart attack  
 and Vine.

INSERT

PHOTOGRAPH OF TOM WAITS.

MR. E  
 (V.O.)  
 Los Angeles -- a city in perpetual  
 motion.

MONTAGE

A BEDLAM OF RICH PEOPLE, HOMELESS PEOPLE, YOUNG PEOPLE, OLD PEOPLE, PEOPLE OF VARIOUS ETHNICITIES, ETC.

MR. E

(V.O.)

Babylon on the Pacific, full of black dahlias, strangers, botox vixens, showbiz babies, Iranians, Armenians, Cambodians, Vietnamese, Chinese, Filipinos, Hispanics, slicksters, wannabes, should have beens, could have beens, movers, shakers, up-a-comers and down-and-outters.

As the sun sets, the taxi pulls up to the Chemosphere House, which, at the time, was MR. E's residence.

CUT TO:

INT. THE CHEMOSPHERE HOUSE - CONTINUOUS

With a panoramic view of the San Fernando Valley, the Chemosphere House is one of the most unique examples of "Modern Age" architecture in the United States. It sits on a 29-foot-high concrete column resembling a hovering flying saucer.

The interior of the 2,000 square foot house is space-age bachelor pad: bean bag chairs, tables with lava lamps, burning incense, beaded doorways, Moroccan tapestries, and lots of stuffed pillows.

MR. E and SUZANNE are comfortably snuggling on the pillows. They are in a moment of utter capitulation to each other and the environment in which they inhabit.

A jazz trio plays in the middle of the living room. STEW plays the piano and sings. CHARLIE HADEN plays upright bass. GARTH HUDSON plays the organ. The musicians are dressed in Day-Glo, military regalia.

They play a song called "Love Like That."

CUT TO:

EXT. HOLLYWOOD BLVD. - NIGHT

MR. E and SUZANNE walk along the Hollywood Walk of Fame. They come up to an intersection.

A din of car horns rises in unison. Discordant and full of anxious tension.

With traffic in a gridlock and at a standstill, MR. E and SUZANNE walk to the center of the intersection and passionately embrace.

At this juncture, the horns toot out Tchaikovsky's "1812 Overture."

All is in harmony for a brief moment in time.

END OF FLASHBACK

FADE TO BLACK

EXT. DANUBE RIVER - DAY

MR. E is aboard an excursion boat. The boat has explored the Danube Bend region, including Esztergom with its spectacular red-roofed Catholic cathedral and the village of Visegrád, renowned for its ruins of one of Hungary's finest royal palaces.

POV MR. E:

He walks through the corridor of the boat, randomly opening doors. Inside the first room, he comes across a man with wild hair, exxagerated facial features, and bug eyes.

PROFESSOR WALDABEE

Film is behavior. And what is character but the determination of incident. And what is incident but the illumination of character. And what makes good character? Dramatic need, point of view, attitude, and of course, change.

MR. E closes the door and continues down the corridor.

POV MR. E:

He comes to another door and opens it. Inside a small room, two MANNEQUINS pose like models and recite Shakespeare.

MANNEQUIN #1

To be or not to be -- that is the question.

MANNEQUIN #2

The man that hath no music in himself, nor is not moved with concord of sweet sounds, is fit for treasons, stratagems and spoils;  
(MORE)

MANNEQUIN #2 (cont'd)  
 the motion of his spirit is dull as  
 night and his affections dark as  
 Erebus. Let no such man be trusted.

MR. E closes the door and continues down the corridor. He  
 bumps into CLEM BURKE.

MR. E  
 Clem! What do you think?

CLEM BURKE  
 I think people are good everywhere.

MR. E nods and walks past CLEM BURKE.

MR. E sees a familiar neon beer sign and walks into a lounge.

MR. E  
 I need a drink.

MR. E heads in and takes a seat at the bar.

A BARTENDER approaches.

BARTENDER  
 What can I get you?

MR. E  
 Whatever is customary.

The BARTENDER smiles, points, winks and clicks his tongue.

Just then, ELVIS PRESLEY and FRANK SINATRA walk in from  
 nowhere in particular and belly up to the bar.

FRANK SINATRA  
 I'll have a double Jack and Coke.  
 (Lights the cigarette in  
 his mouth, takes a puff  
 and exhales)  
 And the kid will have the same.  
 (To Elvis)  
 So many broads, Elvis.

ELVIS PRESLEY  
 So little time, Frank.

FRANK SINATRA  
 Everywhere...dames.

ELVIS PRESLEY  
 Like fish in the sea.

FRANK SINATRA  
Everyday, more and more chicks.

ELVIS PRESLEY  
I feel your pain Frank.

FRANK SINATRA  
I feel yours Elvis.

ELVIS PRESLEY  
What's a poor boy to do?

FRANK SINATRA  
I wish I knew kid.  
(Takes a drag off his  
cigarette)  
I wish I knew.

ELVIS PRESLEY  
A riddle, an enigma.

FRANK SINATRA  
A real down-in-the-mud conundrum.

The drinks arrive.

FRANK SINATRA  
(Picks up his drink and  
raises his glass)  
Here's to you Elvis.

ELVIS PRESLEY  
(Picks up his glass and raises his  
drink)  
Here's to you Frank.

They toast.

ANGLE ON

MR. E finishes his drink.

THE CAMERA PANS ACROSS THE LOUNGE.

TAREK, DILEK'S older brother, sits in a corner booth, sipping coffee, reading a newspaper, and observing MR. E.

From a dark cavern within the lounge, a TRAPPIST MONK (JUDE CAIN ) with a dirty face, dark glasses, and a hood covering his head sits in the shadows and watches both TAREK and MR. E. He takes notes and does his best to remain incognito.

CUT TO:

EXT. BUDAPEST - CONTINUOUS

ANGLE ON

A PANORAMIC VIEW OF BUDAPEST

CUT TO:

The boat berths.

MR. E strolls toward the exit.

ANGLE ON

PANORAMIC VIEW OF BUDAPEST FROM THE BOAT

MR. E

The Queen of the Danube.

MR. E descends the ramp and smiles as he notices TRUE LOVE waiting patiently on the dock.

MR. E

You always know where to find me,  
don't you?

TRUE LOVE

(Nonchalantly)

All in a day's work.

TAREK follows, descending the ramp and keeping his eye on MR. E.

TRUE LOVE

Any bags?

MR. E

I put them in a locker at the train  
station. I wanted to cruise the  
river, accessory-free.

TRUE LOVE

(Smiles)

Of course.

MR. E nods.

TRUE LOVE

I have a car waiting. We have a  
full day of interviews back at the  
hotel.

MR. E laughs.

MR. E  
Always a full schedule, never a  
break in the old routine.

TRUE LOVE  
We have an agenda to follow.

MR. E  
Fuck the agenda. I need a cocktail.  
Surely we have time for a quick  
nip.

TRUE LOVE  
We'll see.

TRUE LOVE calmly guides MR. E toward a waiting taxi. They get  
in and speed away.

As the car jets off, TAREK takes note and hails a taxi.

CUT TO:

INT. TAXI CAB - CONTINUOUS

The taxi zooms through Budapest.

MONTAGE

RANDOM SHOTS OF BUDAPEST: THE HOUSES OF PARLIAMENT, BUDA  
CASTLE, MATTHIAS CHURCH, FISHERMEN'S BASTION, THE CHAIN  
BRIDGE, THE MILLENNARY MONUMENT, THE OPERA HOUSE, ST.  
STEPHEN'S BASILICA, ETC.

TRUE LOVE  
(To the DRIVER)  
Please take us to the Corinthia  
Grand Hotel Royal.

MR. E  
(To TRUE LOVE)  
How's the bar?

TRUE LOVE  
Fully stocked, I'm sure.

MR. E  
Just the way I like it.

TRUE LOVE  
Well, first things first. We'll get  
you settled in at the hotel and  
I'll arrange for your bags at the  
train station.

MR. E  
 (Hands a key to TRUE LOVE)  
 Here.

TRUE LOVE  
 (Takes the key)  
 Very good.  
 (Pauses)  
 We have a few people to meet with  
 this afternoon.

MR. E looks out the window and notices a house with peeling walls. In front of the house is a HOMELESS MAN sleeping on a bench.

MR. E  
 (Turns to TRUE LOVE)  
 Like who?

TRUE LOVE  
 The usual menagerie of journalists  
 I imagine. The show is sold out and  
 every press pass we had has been  
 spoken for.

MR. E  
 (Sarcastically)  
 Great.

MR. E turns back to the window and sees The BUTTERFLY REVOLUTION, a small and colorful strip bar.

He smiles to himself.

The taxi pulls up to the hotel.

CUT TO:

EXT. THE CORINTHIA GRAND HOTEL ROYAL - CONTINUOUS

MR. E and TRUE LOVE exit the taxi.

TRUE LOVE pays the DRIVER.

MR. E  
 When's our first interview?

TRU LOVE  
 In a couple of hours.

MR. E  
 Where at?

TRUE LOVE

In the main meeting room near the  
mezzanine.

MR. E

Fine. I'll see you then.

MR. E walks off.

TRUE LOVE shakes his head and walks to the hotel.

CUT TO:

EXT. ERZSEBET BOULEVARD - CONTINUOUS

MR. E strolls leisurely down the sidewalk.

He is accosted by a young Hungarian man, a self-styled  
HIPSTER dressed in a lavender jumpsuit.

HIPSTER

Mr. E, you're an inspiration.

MR. E

How so?

HIPSTER

I find beauty through your torment.  
Your lamentation for Vincent Van  
Gogh was a milestone in my life.

MR. E

Oh yeah, the piece I wrote for  
Nicolai the Bulgarian Monk. A  
milestone, huh?

HIPSTER #1

Yeah. That and Gorecki's Third  
Symphony.

MR. E

Max Storm was very fond of that  
one.

MR. E shakes the HIPSTER's hand.

MR. E

Thanks for your kind words, my  
friend.

MR. E continues walking and comes upon The BUTTERFLY REVOLUTION. He enters.

CUT TO:

INT. BUTTERFLY REVOLUTION - CONTINUOUS

Loud techno music throbs mindlessly in the atmosphere. Lascivious women walk about the club, scantily dressed, bouncing from table to table.

MR. E finds a seat at a lone table in a dark corner of the club.

A young, nubile girl named EVA approaches.

EVA  
Szervusz. Hello. Are you Hungarian?

MR. E  
No, I'm American.

EVA  
Want to buy me a drink?

MR. E  
What's your name?

EVA  
Eva.

MR. E  
Sure Eva, I'll buy you a drink.

EVA turns and signals a WAITRESS.

EVA sticks up two fingers and nods. She turns attention back to MR. E and sidles up next to him.

EVA  
You look familiar.

MR. E  
Me? Naw. I'm just a visiting dignitary looking for a good time.

The WAITRESS approaches with the drinks.

In a flash, MR. E takes a glass and gulps down its contents.

MR. E  
(Irritated)  
Champagne? What the hell!

EVA smiles and sips from her glass.

Another girl named ERIKA approaches the table and sits down next to MR. E.

MR. E  
(To ERIKA)  
And who might you be?

ERIKA  
I am Erika.

MR. E  
Would you like to join us for a  
drink, Erika?

ERIKA  
Of course.

ERIKA signals the WAITRESS.

The WAITRESS acknowledges ERIKA.

A third girl named LIZA approaches the table.

LIZA  
Van ön Magyar?

MR. E  
(Looks at EVA)  
What did she say?

EVA  
She wants to know if you will buy  
her a drink.

MR. E  
You girls like to drink, don't you.  
(Motions to LIZA)  
By all means darling, please join  
us.

LIZA signals the WAITRESS.

The WAITRESS acknowledges LIZA.

MR. E puts extends one arm around EVA and the other around ERIKA. LIZA sits across from them.

MR. E  
Looks like I came to the right  
place.

ERIKA  
Yes. We love to party with American  
men.

LIZA  
(Smiles)  
Igen.

MR. E  
What did she say?

EVA  
She said "Yes."

MR. E laughs.

The WAITRESS arrives with more drinks.

MR. E  
Could you bring me something a  
little more...kick?

The WAITRESS looks confused.

ERIKA  
(To the WAITRESS)  
Bull's Blood.

MR. E  
What's that?

ERIKA  
It's a good drink. You will like  
it.

MR. E  
Sounds dangerous.  
(To the WAITRESS)  
A round of Bull's Blood for  
everyone.

The WAITRESS leaves.

PANDIT, a large, ominous man wearing a turban approaches the  
table. He has a strange accent -- part Russian, part  
Pakistani.

PANDIT  
May I have a word with you?

MR. E  
Come on man. Can't you see I'm  
occupied?

PANDIT  
Aren't you the famous American  
musician, Mr. E?

EVA, ERIKA and LIZA all look at MR. E.

MR. E  
Yeah, yeah, blah, blah, so what.

PANDIT  
I don't think you understand. I own  
this place and I can have you  
removed at any time.

MR. E  
Is that right?

PANDIT  
Oh, I can assure you.

MR. E  
Well, fuckin' A. What do you want  
to talk about Korla?

PANDIT  
My name is Pandit. Please come with  
me.

MR. E  
Come with you where?

PANDIT  
Do me this favor, and your visit is  
on the house.

MR. E shuffles in his seat uncomfortably.

The WAITRESS arrives with a full round of Bull's Blood.

MR. E grabs a glass and takes a big gulp.

MR. E  
Damn!  
(To PANDIT)  
Look...I'm...busy...ok?

PANDIT  
(Calmly)  
Then I must ask you to pay your  
bill and leave.

MR. E  
 (Smirks and takes another  
 drink from a random  
 glass)  
 Whoa!  
 (Pauses)  
 How...much...I...owe?

PANDIT  
 200,000 forint.

MR. E shakes his head wildly.

MR. E  
 What's that in American dollars?

MR. E steals another quick gulp from a random glass.

PANDIT  
 One-thousand dollars.

MR. E  
 (Spits out his drink)  
 One-thousand dollars!

MR. E looks at the EVA, ERIKA and LIZA. They smile and sip their drinks.

PANDIT  
 Perhaps you will come with me now.

MR. E  
 I suppose so.  
 (To EVA, ERIKA and LIZA)  
 I'll catch up with you ladies  
 later.

EVA, ERIKA and LIZA register blank stares without expression.

MR. E gets up and follows PANDIT.

CUT TO:

INT. STAIRWAY - CONTINUOUS

PANDIT and MR. E ascend the stairway to an unusual room.

CUT TO:

INT. ROOM - CONTINUOUS

The room is shrouded with large, Day-Glo tapestries and banners. Oddly shaped streamers and fluorescent black lights dangle from the ceiling.

A painting of JÓZSEF CARDINAL MINDSZENTY, the late leader of Hungary's Roman Catholics, is on one wall. A second painting of JOSEPH STALIN is on an adjacent wall.

A poster of BUGS BUNNY is nailed to a bright rosy red column on the left side of the stage, which is at the far end of the room.

Elsewhere, there are small pamphlets with wild drawings randomly stuck to the walls and floor.

As PANDIT and MR E walk toward the stage, they pass by GRAETTINGER and FATHER MERTON who are sitting with their legs folded over lotus-style and their eyes closed tight. GODOT is between them, standing on his head, looking away.

Behind GODOT, the TRAPPIST MONK (JUDE CAIN) with a dirty face, dark glasses, and a hood covering his head sits astride, discreetly watching MR. E from the shadows.

PANDIT guides MR. E to a seat directly in front of the stage.

On the stage is the GIRL IN A BOX. Her head sits on top of a Day-Glo pink square container, which hides the rest of her body.

MR. E squints, rubs his eyes, and notices that she doesn't seem to have any legs or arms.

She begins to sing.

MR. E is captivated and psychedelized. She has the voice of an immaculate angel.

MR. E stands and approaches the GIRL IN A BOX. She looks at him seductively.

GIRL IN A BOX  
(Whispers)  
Beware. There is trouble lurking  
out there in the darkness.

Out of nowhere, a MAN WEARING A CLOWN'S MASK lunges at MR. E.

TAREK intercedes and pushes the MAN WEARING A CLOWN'S MASK against the wall.

TAREK grabs MR. E and pulls him out of the room and into a fun house of mirrors with outlets to strange rooms.

TAREK pushes a door open and they are suddenly outside on the street.

TAREK takes MR. E to a waiting taxi. They get in and the taxi whisks them away.

TAREK

You almost got into a serious situation in there.

MR. E

What do you mean?

TAREK

Russian mafia. If they smell money or someone with notoriety, they will kill, kidnap, maim, or do anything they can to extract a ransom.

MR. E

What about that girl in the box?

TAREK lights a cigarette.

TAREK

She's a friend of mine.

MR. E

Can she really sing like that?

TAREK

No. And she isn't a double amputee either.

MR. E becomes somewhat agitated.

MR. E

Who are you and how do you know this?

TAREK

My name is Tarek.

(Takes a drag off the cigarette and exhales out of the open car window)

I understand you frequent, shall we say, such questionable establishments.

(MORE)

TAREK (cont'd)

(Pauses)

I'm also the brother of Dilek.

MR. E

Dilek?

TAREK

Yes, Dilek.

MR. E

Is she ok?

TAREK

She's a very troubled young woman.

MR. E

How so?

TAREK

Do you remember a woman named  
Guney?

MR. E pauses for a moment and looks out the window.

MR. E

I do. Paris. About 15 years ago.  
She was a journalist from Ankara.

TAREK

She was our mother.

MR. E

Your mother? I had no idea.

TAREK

I didn't think so. When my father  
found out about your affair, he  
went mad.

MR. E

(Dumbfounded)

You and Dilek are Guney's children?

TAREK

(Pauses)

Yes.

MR. E

We spent about a week together and  
then she just vanished.

TAREK

My father found her diary. It was  
very explicit.

MR. E  
What happened?

TAREK  
She planned on leaving us to be with you. In her diary, she claimed you and her were reincarnated lovers in another life. And it was time for the two of you to reunite.

MR. E  
I remember she was a very beautiful, highly intelligent woman. But I had no idea.

TAREK  
My father killed her, then himself. After the dust settled, Dilek found the diary and became obsessed with you. When she found out you were coming to Istanbul, she got a job at the hotel you were staying at and made sure she was working when you arrived.

MR. E  
(Winces)  
So why are you in Budapest?

TAREK crushes the cigarette butt into the palm of his hand.

TAREK grimaces slightly and looks up at MR. E.

TAREK  
Satan oscillate my metallic sonatas.

Like a deer in headlights, MR. E is flush with embarrassment.

CUT TO:

INT. TICKET BOOTH - DAY

C.U.

A FEMALE'S HAND WITH MONEY REACHES OVER THE TICKET COUNTER

A white hospital bracelet is on the wrist of the hand. The hand belongs to DILEK.

DILEK  
Vienna.

The money is taken.

A few seconds pass.

C.U.

DILEK'S HAND ACCEPTS THE TICKET

The hand pulls away quickly.

CUT TO:

INT. TELEVISION STUDIO - NIGHT

FLASHBACK

The HOLY PRIMITIVE appear on the ED DOUGLAS show.

ED DOUGLAS stands in front of a curtain. He sports a checkered suit and a really bad toupee.

ED DOUGLAS

Ladies and Gentlemen, our next guest currently has the Number One record in the country. And they're here to play it for you tonight. So, without further ado, please welcome, from New York City, the Holy Primitive performing their hit, "Spin Into The Black Hole Circle Sun."

The curtain opens and the HOLY PRIMITIVE are on stage, poised to begin a song.

MR. E looks around quickly, counts off, and the band falls into "Spin Into The Black Hole Circle Sun."

Midway through the song...

CUT TO:

INT. EDWARD ESTLIN'S BEDROOM - DAY

SYLVIA SEXTON sits on the side of young EDWARD ESTLIN's bed.

SYLVIA

Baudelaire said: "Each one of us is man, woman and child. And the child is always in trouble."

SYLVIA looks deeply into EDWARD's eyes.

SYLVIA

Edward, you are to create an inner landscape, full of surreal images, finely tuned concepts, and eclectic hurly-burlies of sound. Remember for the dreamer, everything is possible. Time and space do not exist. Stalk the muse, let your imagination spin, weave, improvise and deconstruct.

SYLVIA pulls up the covers to EDWARD'S chin.

EDWARD smiles. He is mesmerized by his mother's words. Every syllable sings to him.

SYLVIA pulls out a small box and presents it to EDWARD.

SYLVIA

Here's my tinderbox of esoterica.  
Use it wisely.

CUT TO:

INT. TELEVISION STUDIO - NIGHT

The HOLY PRIMITIVE are playing the last few bars of "Spin Into The Black Hole Circle Sun."

Suddenly, MR. E turns around, unstraps his guitar and smashes it into the bass amp.

MAX STORM turns around and notices there's no sound coming from his amp. He notices MR. E is destroying it.

MAX stops, walks over the MR. E, grabs his guitar, and smashes it on the stage.

At the point, everyone stops playing as MR. E and MAX stare each other down.

ALISTAIR FAITH stands between them.

ALISTAIR

Whatever is going on between you two, I don't think this is the proper venue, mates.

LADY STRANGE steps in and looks into MR. E's eyes.

LADY STRANGE

(Smiles seductively)

Whatever trip you're pulling baby,  
I hope you know what you're doing.

MR. E and MAX look at each other, then into the audience, and start to laugh. They walk over to the drum set and kick it.

SWISS KRIS cowers and dashes off stage.

MR. E and MAX push over the amps and throw everything into a pile.

They invite people up from the audience, who push and shove their way down.

Soon, chairs are flying, screaming is heard, television executives and technicians are losing their minds, and all hell breaks loose.

CUT TO:

ANGLE ON

COLONEL SALT makes a hasty exit out the side door.

ANGLE ON

FATHER MERTON and HORACE GRAETTINGER watch from the wings.

ANGLE ON

JUDE CAIN stands on the side of the stage, smiling and fervently writing it all down.

END OF FLASHBACK

CUT TO:

INT. HISTORICAL MUSEUM OF BUDAPEST - NIGHT

The museum is dark.

MR. E is alone, walking through the museum.

Suddenly, he enters a room full of famous Hungarians standing in a circle.

MR. E walks to the center of the circle.

MR. E POV:

BELA LUGOSI  
I want to suck your blood.

HARRY HOUDINI  
Wanna play hide and seek? You're  
it!

FRANZ LISTZ  
How many woodchucks would the city  
chuck if it could chuck woodchucks?

BELA BARTOK  
Goo Goo Gaa Gaa...

MR. E is confused and places his hands over his ears.

THE CAMERA QUICKLY CIRCLES AROUND AND AROUND AS EACH FAMOUS  
HUNGARIAN CONTINUES SPEAKING COMPLETE AND UTTER NONSENSE.

FADE TO BLACK

INT. THE CORINTHIA GRAND HOTEL ROYAL - DAY

MR. E walks into the lobby of the hotel.

He spots a sign that says, "MEETING ROOM" with an arrow  
pointing down a wide hallway.

MR. E walks down the hallway, rounds a corner, and is  
suddenly greeted by a three-headed man with three names: MEL,  
CASPER, and BALTHAZAR.

MR. E freezes with a mix of fear and intrigue.

MEL  
My name is Mel.

CASPER  
My name is Casper.

BALTHAZAR  
My name is Balthazar.

MEL  
Id.

CASPER  
Ego.

BALTHAZAR  
Super ego.

MEL

Thesis.

CASPER

Anti-thesis.

BALTHAZAR

Synthesis.

MEL

We are here to bring you gold.

MEL hands MR. E a pouch of gold.

CASPER

Frankincense.

CASPER hands MR. E a purse filled with frankincense.

BALTHAZAR

Myrrh.

BALTHAZAR hands MR. E a small satchel of myrrh.

MR. E laughs nervously and stares intently at the creature before him. He sets the gold, frankincense and myrrh down on a nearby counter top.

MR. E

But I am not a prophet.

ALL THREE

We know that. But you do have a gift.

NICK CAVE approaches from behind.

NICK CAVE

Mr. E?

MR. E turns around quickly.

MR. E

Yes.

NICK CAVE

My name is Nick Cave.

MR. E

(To himself)

Nick, Mel, Casper, Balthazar -- the new fab four...

NICK CAVE  
 (Baffled)  
 I beg your pardon.

MR. E turns back to introduce NICK CAVE to MEL, CASPER and BALTHAZAR, but they have vanished.

MR. E  
 I think I'm in need of some sacramental substances.

MR. E looks at the counter top and notices the gold, frankincense and myrrh are no longer there. He shrugs.

MR. E and NICK CAVE walk along.

NICK CAVE  
 I've just been in interview hell.

MR. E  
 Lucky you. I'm about to start.

NICK CAVE  
 Same questions, same answers, same old razzamatazz.

MR. E  
 One does get sick talking about one's self. You playing tonight?

NICK CAVE  
 Yeah, I'm at the Palace of Arts. And you?

MR. E  
 The Budapest Arena. What are your plans later?

NICK CAVE  
 No plans.

MR. E  
 Well, let's meet up and see where the night takes us.

NICK CAVE  
 Alright Mr. E. I'll be here at the stroke of midnight.

They shake hands and go their separate ways.

CUT TO:

INT. MEETING ROOM - DAY

MR. E sits on a chair with a blue screen behind him.

The INTERVIEWER is a square-looking, smug fellow with big ears and a really bad comb-over. He puffs away on a cigarette and shoves a microphone in MR. E's face.

INTERVIEWER  
How's the tour going?

MR. E  
(Subdued)  
Every night is a little less narcissistic and a little more syphean.

The INTERVIEWER props himself up, stiffens and lowers his voice in an awkward and forced manner.

INTERVIEWER  
(Robotic-like)  
Are you recording soon?

MR. E  
(Robotic-like)  
Yes, I'm recording soon.

INTERVIEWER  
(Indignant)  
What do you have say about all your exploits covered in the tabloids?

MR. E  
(Indignant)  
I'd say, ask a legitimate question, or I'm out of here you little monkey!

INTERVIEWER  
You don't have to talk to me like that.

MR. E  
  
Like what, you viper!

INTERVIEWER  
Like that.

MR. E  
 Let me see. What about you Mr.  
 Interviewer? Gay? Straight?  
 Bestiality?

The INTERVIEWER is stunned and pulls back. Shaken, he looks at the DIRECTOR. The DIRECTOR smiles and waves him on. The INTERVIEWER bounces to his feet, turns on his heel, and walks away.

MR. E  
 Yeah, that's what I thought. Don't  
 like the tables turned, do you fun  
 boy?

TRUE LOVE enters.

TRUE LOVE  
 What's going on?

MR. E  
 What's going on?

TRUE LOVE  
 Yeah.

MR. E  
 Marvin Gaye. I'm out of here!

MR. E stands and quickly exits the meeting room.

FADE IN:

EXT. MINIATURE GOLF COURSE - NIGHT

MR. E and IMRE KERTESZ, a famous Hungarian writer who won the 2002 Nobel Prize for Literature, are playing a round of miniature golf.

They line up at the third hole.

THE CAMERA SLOWLY PANS.

IMRE  
 It's strange how we are constantly  
 trying to explain the unexplainable  
 complex of being.

MR. E  
 It's like life demands some  
 ambiguous revelation that it is  
 incapable of understanding.

IMRE  
A moralizing phantom note that  
permeates the structure.

MR. E  
Superfluous hand-me-downs.

MR. E places a golf ball on the tee.

IMRE  
Plato in his cave.

MR. E  
Sabato in his tunnel.

IMRE  
Subversion of words.

MR. E  
Depraved and landlocked.

MR. E swings his club and hits the ball hard. It veers away  
and into the darkness.

IMRE  
(Smiles)  
I thoroughly enjoy your  
desconstruction.

IMRE places a golf ball on the tee.

MR. E  
(Smiles)  
I always think I'm just a  
Zoroastrian Mennonite run amok.

IMRE  
Semantics, my friend. Semantics.

IMRE swings his club and hits the ball squarely. He sinks a  
hole-in-one.

IMRE looks up and smiles.

MR. E smiles back.

FADE TO:

INT. THE BUDAPEST ARENA - NIGHT

Amongst scattered applause, MR. E walks on stage. A single  
spotlight follows him as he straps on his guitar and walks to  
the center of the stage.

He approaches the microphone and stands still for a moment, surveying the audience. He begins to speak slowly.

MR. E

Midway in the journey, I found  
myself in dark woods. The right  
road lost. To tell about those  
woods is hard. So tangled and rough  
and savage, that thinking of it  
now, I feel the old fear stirring.  
For the father, son and holy ghost,  
this is my deception.

MR. E begins strumming his guitar. After a couple of bars, he and his makeshift band fall into a song called "My Deception."

FADE OUT:

INT. FAT MO'S SPEAKEASY AND MUSIC CLUB (BUDAPEST)- NIGHT

MR. E and NICK CAVE occupy a private booth in a hidden pocket of what resembles a classic jazz cellar. They drink Hungarian beer and are extremely inebriated. Several empty bottles are scattered about the table before them.

There's plenty of "scratchiti" and an Ornette Coleman poster on the aged walls in the club.

Various local drunks and musicians lollygag within the premises.

In their dissipated state, MR. E and NICK CAVE are oblivious of everything taking place around them.

NICK CAVE

It is hard work loathing everything  
all the time.

MR. E

But to loathe is to love in its own  
abstract fashion.

In the foreground, a MAN walking on his hands passes by the booth. His legs dangle carelessly.

MR. E and NICK CAVE remain oblivious of what is taking place before them as they continue talking.

NICK CAVE

I guess you're what they call a  
renaissance man of sorrow.

MR. E  
 Waiting like an alter boy for his  
 turn in the mercy seat.

In the foreground, a MINER walks by and tips his hat fitted  
 with a head lamp to no one in particular.

A THIN MAN juggling three broken bottles appears from the  
 opposite direction and nods at no one in particular.

A SUMO WRESTLER follows and passes by.

MR. E and NICK CAVE remain oblivious of what is taking place  
 before them as they continue talking.

NICK CAVE  
 I guess we all are.

MR. E  
 Did you ever meet Johnny Cash?

NICK CAVE  
 I did. A very gracious giant of a  
 man.

MR. E  
 Whenever I have doubts about God,  
 Johnny Cash is the ghost of reason.  
 For only God could create a voice  
 like that.

NICK CAVE  
 His voice crawls through the  
 caverns of confusion, and signals  
 all is not well. But hold on, help  
 is coming.

CUT TO:

EXT. WAR ZONE - CONTINUOUS

MR. E and NICK CAVE sit on patio furniture in the midst of  
 combat. Bombs fall, grenades explode, and gunfire flies over  
 their heads.

MR. E and NICK CAVE remain oblivious of what is taking place  
 around them as they continue talking.

MR. E  
 Have you ever experienced opium?

NICK CAVE

No, but heroin was my mistress for many years.

CUT TO:

EXT. A ROADSIDE CAFE - CONTINUOUS

MR. E and NICK CAVE sit on benches in the middle of a fierce snow storm.

MR. E and NICK CAVE remain oblivious of what is taking place around them as they continue talking.

MR. E

I traveled to Bangkok in search of the ever elusive point. The celestial plant of joy. About two hours outside of the city, I met Lau, a wise man of many years. We were companions for three months. Opium is the perfect drug.

NICK CAVE

Why did you leave?

MR. E

I guess it ran its course. And maybe we humans don't really want paradise on earth. Maybe we need to suffer like Christ.

CUT TO:

INT. FAT MO'S SPEAKEASY AND MUSIC CLUB (BUDAPEST)- CONTINUOUS

The TRAPPIST MONK (JUDE CAIN )with a dirty face, dark glasses, and a hood covering his head sits in another pocket of the speakeasy, playing a slew of Bartok Bagatelles on an old upright piano.

MR. E takes a long pull off a bottle of suds and nods to NICK CAVE.

MR. E

I met a man once who claimed to be the great grandson of the poet Baudelaire. He told me that to find the center, a man must deconstruct.

NICK CAVE

That's strange. I met a man who  
claimed to be the great grandson of  
playwright August Strindberg and he  
told me the same thing.

MR. E and NICK CAVE share a laugh. They look to where the  
music is coming from, stand and walk toward the MONK.

The MONK continues to play, slumped over, shrouded by the  
hood. MR. E and NICK CAVE ignore him and sing along to the  
music.

MR. E

(Sings)

Love ever unsatisfied lives always  
in the moment that it is about to  
explode.

They continue singing random lines and finish.

MR. E turns to look at the MONK, who shies away.

MR. E shrugs as he and NICK CAVE return to the booth.

NICK CAVE

Oh, it almost slipped my mind. I  
met a lovely bird named Colette.  
She said you and her had a brief  
liaison.

CUT TO:

INT. GREENWICH VILLAGE CLUB (NYC) - NIGHT

FLASHBACK

MR. E sits on stool, center stage, underneath a single  
spotlight, playing acoustic guitar.

MR. E

(V.O.)

Edgar Allan Poe frequented  
Greenwich Village in the latter  
part of the 19th century.

INSERT

A PHOTO OF EDGAR ALLAN POE.

MR. E

(V.O.)

Later, the Beats adopted it as their hub.

Smoke lingers as occasional silhouettes stand and move from one side of the club to the other. Scattered voices muffle and burrow as the sound of an acoustic guitar sets a tranquil mood.

MR. E leans over, watching the movements of his left hand forming chords as he continues strumming.

MR. E

(V.O.)

For me, my time in the Village enabled me to load up on all the things I would take with me through my own trials and tribulations. At first, I felt like Ellison's Invisible Man. But later, I adapted and made friends and shook the hullabaloo with all I had.

MR. E stops playing and walks off stage. It's a small, yet enthusiastic crowd.

MR. E pulls up a seat at a small table. He withdraws a flask from inside his jacket.

SLIPPY THE STUTTERING MAN approaches.

SLIPPY THE STUTTERING MAN

M-m-m-man, y-y-y-you are s-s-s-something.

MR. E

You think so?

SLIPPY THE STUTTERING MAN

Y-y-y-yes. S-s-s-sort of l-l-l-like K-k-k-kurt W-w-w-w-weill on a-a-a-acid.

MR. E

Thanks Slippy.

Several people mill about the club, exchanging pleasantries and whatnot.

MR. E catches sight of COLETTE, a young woman with bright red hair.

She wears a calico dress, rich in ornate shapes and designs. The dress accentuates COLETTE's stunning figure and form.

MR. E is captivated as he stares her down.

COLETTE looks back and smiles.

MR. E stands and approaches COLETTE.

MR E  
Good evening.

COLETTE  
Hello.

MR E  
I'm Edward.

COLETTE  
I'm Colette.

MR E  
Like the writer?

COLETTE  
(Smiles)  
Yeah.

MR E  
You wanna go see Lenny Breau at the  
Cafe Lincoln?

COLETTE  
(Bemused)  
OK.

CUT TO:

INT. CAFE LINCOLN - CONTINUOUS

Guitarist LENNY BREAU is on stage, playing exquisite, finely tuned jazz.

COLETTE and MR. E sit at a nearby table, enjoying each other's company.

LENNY BREAU stops playing and looks in MR. E's direction.

LENNY BREAU  
Hey E, you wanna come up and sing  
"My Funny Valentine"?

MR. E ambles to his feet and joins LENNY BREAU on stage.

COLETTE sits and watches. She is smitten by MR. E.

FADE OUT:

INT. MR. E'S SMALL MOTEL ROOM - NIGHT

MR. E and COLETTE lay in a bed, staring at the ceiling.

COLETTE  
You seem a bit nervous.

MR. E  
Well, a bit.

COLETTE  
I guess you're not the average  
Lethario.

MR. E  
(Smiles)  
Not yet.

COLETTE  
How long have you been in New York?

MR. E  
Not long.

THE CAMERA PANS ACROSS THE ROOM AND OUT THE WINDOW OF THE BUILDING.

As if the roof of the building rolled open, MR. E and COLETTE make love under a sky dripping with stars and promise.

MR. E  
(V.O.)  
Colette was a magician of emotion  
and thought. She was the prototype  
of what I was looking for. But  
something with us never quite  
clicked.

(Pauses)  
It was me. I was on a mission. Like  
the pope, I had plans. I had a  
papacy. To travel, to seek...the  
great cities of the world.

THE CAMERA FLIES THROUGH A DARK SKY, DOTTED WITH CLOUDS AND STARS AND GALAXIES.

MR. E  
(V.O.)  
London.

INSERT

PANORAMIC PHOTOGRAPH OF LONDON.

MR. E  
(V.O.)  
Paris.

INSERT

PANORAMIC PHOTOGRAPH OF PARIS.

MR. E  
(V.O.)  
Warsaw.

INSERT

PANORAMIC PHOTOGRAPH OF WARSAW.

MR. E  
(V.O.)  
Shanghai.

INSERT

PANORAMIC PHOTOGRAPH OF SHANGHAI.

MR. E  
(V.O.)  
Bombay.

INSERT

PANORAMIC PHOTOGRAPH OF BOMBAY.

MR. E  
(V.O.)  
The Arctic Circle.

INSERT

FOOTAGE PANNING THE ARCTIC CIRCLE.

MR. E  
(V.O.)  
The Andean mountaintops.

INSERT

FOOTAGE PANNING THE ANDES.

MR. E  
 (V.O.)  
 Lush tropical islands, war zones  
 and temples.

MONTAGE

RANDOM PHOTOS AND FOOTAGE OF TROPICAL ISLANDS, WAR ZONES, AND  
 VARIOUS HOUSES OF WORSHIP, ETC.

MR. E  
 (V.O.)  
 I was St. John and this was the  
 dark night of my soul. Deranging  
 and purging in pursuit of divine  
 knowledge.

THE CAMERA SWOOPS BACK TO THE BUILDING AND INTO THE MOTEL  
 ROOM.

COLETTE is on her side sleeping, facing away from MR. E.

MR. E stares aimlessly at the ceiling above.

MR. E  
 (V.O.)  
 Colette and I had no big blow out.  
 Just the inevitable human fizzle.  
 Two pilgrims engaged in a brief  
 dialogue, now relegated to memory.

END OF FLASHBACK

CUT TO:

INT. FAT MO'S SPEAKEASY AND MUSIC CLUB (BUDAPEST) - NIGHT

MR. E looks at NICK CAVE and shakes his head in  
 acknowledgement.

MR. E  
 Oh my dearest Colette. Thy heart is  
 a wanderer.

NICK CAVE smiles as he slowly enunciates his words.

NICK CAVE  
 The heart that draggeth in the muck  
 is the heart that leadeth us back  
 home.

(MORE)

NICK CAVE (cont'd)  
(Raises his bottle)  
Here's to you Mr. E.

MR. E  
(Raises his bottle)  
The pleasure's all mine.

MR. E and NICK CAVE click their bottles and make a toast.

Out of sight from NICK CAVE and MR. E, the TRAPPIST MONK pulls off his hood and reveals himself as JUDE CAIN. He looks directly into the camera and laughs.

"The Wanderer" by Johnny Cash and U2 plays.

FADE OUT:

INT. THE CORINTHIA GRAND HOTEL ROYAL - DAY

MR. E trudges drunkenly through a corridor of hotel rooms and comes to a door.

He swipes his key, opens the door, and enters.

CUT TO:

INT. MR. E'S HOTEL SUITE - CONTINUOUS

MR. E flicks on the light switch and makes his way to the bedroom.

He removes his coat and looks into the mirror, inspecting his face for any cuts or abrasions. He slaps himself and smiles.

MR. E goes into the living room, removes his shoes and throws them to the side. He picks up a bottle of vodka, about a quarter full, and takes a pull. He stares at a stack of books on the nightstand next to the bed.

CUT TO:

INT. EDWARD ESTLIN'S BEDROOM - DAY

FLASHBACK

EDWARD ESTLIN, aged 15, sits on his bed, reading "War And Peace" by Leo Tolstoy. There are two or three books and assorted note pads on each side of him. On each side of his bed are tall stacks of books. The stacks form walls on each side of the bed. There are additional stacks of books around the room as well.

END OF FLASHBACK

CUT TO:

INT. MR. E'S HOTEL SUITE - CONTINUOUS

MR. E notices a bouquet of flowers with an envelope sitting on a large table in the center of the room.

He gets up, walks over and recognizes two letters written across the envelope: "ee".

MR. E reaches down and carefully opens the envelope. He withdraws a note and slowly unfolds it once.

Scrawled in blood red are the words:

CAIN: A MANIAC!

He snaps the last fold open.

Scrawled in the same blood red is another word:

SUZANNE

SMASH CUT TO:

A BLACK SCREEN WITH THE WORDS:

TO BE CONTINUED...