

SCENE 1

(It is an early morning, in late March, 1977. A late night rainstorm has just ended and Deacon Joseph Russell walks slowly down the sidewalk with a magazine under his arm, an umbrella hanging off his wrist and a cup of coffee in hand. He checks his watch as he arrives at his destination, a one floor old half brick, half stucco faced barber shop with a glass door and half walled window and two barber chairs. Once in, he flicks the lights on and moves over to the coat rack in the far corner of the room. He notices Hobo Joe asleep in one of the barber chairs with the news paper over his face. After listening to him snore loudly for a moment in disbelief, Deac wakes him up.)

HOBO JOE**START** 

DEAC:

Joe...Joe...time to get up...How long have you been in here...It's time to open up for business man.

HOBO JOE

(HE RISES UP SLOWLY, GETTING OUT OF THE DOORWAY)

Huh...hey baby...it's you...

I been waiting on you all night long. Woo...you missed it. Man, it was swingin' at the Spot last night...the food was good, the music was blazing and Sissy...man they say she tore 'em up!

DEAC:

Hmmp.

HOBO JOE:

She sounds better than Lena Horne...look better too! Believe that! I waited there out back for her till they closed, but she must have left out the front. Wonder where she went?

(HOBO JOE LOOKS AROUND).

DEAC

I think she went home early Joe, you'd better be heading there soon too. Here's some coffee...

(HE TAKES CUP FROM THE COUNTER
AND POURS HALF INTO IT AND GIVES IT
TO HOBO JOE)

HOBO JOE

Ooh man, thanks Deac. You sure you ain't seen Sissy?

DEAC

Don't worry about the trash, I took it out back over the weekend. I told you Sissy's probably gone .

HOBO JOE

(HOBO JOE WAVES HIS HAND IN DISMAY
AS HE BEGINS TO HEAD OUT TOWARDS
THE BACK OF THE SHOP.)

Ohh ok then, I guess you right...I can't seem to find that woman anywhere these days...here's your paper. Let me fold it up good as new for you...so you can read your news fresh!

(HOBO JOE SEEMS TO BE HAVING
TROUBLE FOLDING UP THE PAPER)

It came about 6:30 this morning. An old man in a truck with some young kid throwing from the shotgun seat...he ain't got no shotgun arm though. Dang paper ain't hardly make it to the sidewalk. I guess they too scared to stop 'round here these days, I don't hardly blame 'em.

(FINALLY DEAC JUST GENTLY TAKES
THE PAPER FROM HIM)

DEAC

Anything good in it.

HOBO JOE:

Carter got hell on his hands with gas prices. Oh, and he starting some kind of new committee to study crazy folk.

He'd better start with himself, you gotta be stone crazy to be president these days. Oh, The 76'ers still winning. Dr. J. Shot 27 points last night. That man can jump so high he hang in the air like paratroopers landing in France.

DEAC:

How you know about Dr. J?

HOBO JOE:

Oh all the boys watch Dr. J., they got a TV at the liquor store and one in the back at the Spot.

(GRABBING THE BROOM)

I got to keep the place spic n' span for the top brass baby.

END 

DEAC:

Forget about it Joe, Here's a twenty, go get yourself a nice meal.

(DEAC REACHES INTO HIS WALLET AND GIVES HOBO JOE A TWENTY DOLLAR BILL)

You'd best go on in the back and get cleaned up so you look good when you catch up to Sissy...here you go.

(DEAC TOASTS WITH HOBO JOE AND THEN WALKS OVER TO THE RADIO AND TURNS IT ON, THEN AS HE MOVES TO THE DOOR, FLIPS THE CLOSED SIGN OVER TO "OPEN" AND SITS IN HIS CHAIR AND BEGINS TO READ)

Lock the door when you leave.

SAM

(SAM ENTERS SIPPING A CUP OF COFFEE WITH A NEWSPAPER UNDER HIS ARM)

Good morning, Deac. Joe Dickey, where you been? Out drinking all night long as usual. You need to go clean up and go to sleep.

HOBO JOE:

That's just where I'm headed. Y'all have a good day.