

INT. ARTHUR'S CAR - ORANGE COUNTY - DAY

Arthur pulls off his T-shirt as he veers from the freeway onto a flat plane of blacktop. He reaches back and pulls out a striped button-down shirt.

Like much of Orange County this office park looks like it was designed in afternoon on someone's home computer.

A sign out front: LOTTO—dream a little dream of me.

INT. LOTTO MARKETING ANNEX - ORANGE COUNTY - DAY

THOMAS TIRSTON steps into the doorway, bald and Buddha-like—if Buddha were a sex offender. But that's not fair, he's just intense. His internal clock is overwound and seems ready to pop at any moment. Tommy smiles a big, big SMILE.

TIRSTON

You're Arthur Murray!

Arthur steps up to shake, wearing his geek outfit: C&R jacket, bow tie, wire-rimmed glasses and a clipboard. Tirston slaps him on the back, leading him down a grey hallway.

ARTHUR

Hope I'm not too much trouble.

TIRSTON

This is my job! Don't be afraid to ask the tough questions. I've dealt with some real bastards. And you know, I respect them. Because you deserve to know what we do with your money.

Tirston leads Arthur to a door. T.Tirston—Media Advocate.

ARTHUR

Actually, I'm here to talk about Jack Kane.

TIRSTON

Kane?

Tirston's smile dies. WE SEE HIS EVOLUTION IN FAST MOTION. THE CAMERA SPINS AROUND HIM AS HE TRANSFORMS FROM A THIN, HOLLYWOOD GRIFTER THROUGH 2ND TIER HANGER-ON, TO HIS PRESENT STATE AS A SUBURBAN, MIDDLE-CLASS HACK.

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TIRSTON (GLARING)

The police totally cleared me back in '82.

ARTHUR

No! 180 degrees in the wrong direction. Tommy, this isn't even a story *about* Jack Kane really. I'm focussed on the historical *milieu* behind his... death.

TIRSTON

I should have known with that fucking corduroy jacket. Look, I worked hard to get where I am, 'kay? I don't need the National Enquirer shlepping in here with questions my boss doesn't need to hear.

ARTHUR

Exactly! That's why I want to remove the last trace of suspicion.

Tirston gives him a darkly amused look, then snaps back to professional mode—almost.

TIRSTON

You're as bad as I was. I'll give you 30 minutes. Off the record.

Tirston opens his door. It's like a circus blew up in there: posters, bric-a-brac, plants, dolls, lights and color. Arthur stands in the hallway, staring.

TIRSTON (CONT'D)

Come on in. I won't... bite.

INT. TIRSTON'S OFFICE - DAY

Arthur is dazed by the decor. Tirston gestures to the frippery, flipping a switch to send an HO train in circles above their heads.

TIRSTON

It's just eye candy. I'm the candy man. You wouldn't believe how much good press a Springstein box seat at Staples Center can buy. Need a drink?

ARTHUR

It's eleven-thirty?!

TIRSTON

Off the record. Kettle One, zero degrees Centigrade.

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ARTHUR

...small.

Tirston pours shots while Arthur takes notes, getting into his spiel.

ARTHUR

Tell me what you know about the crusades.

TIRSTON

What? Some TV show?

ARTHUR

No, I mean when the Christians killed the Muslims. I'm talking 1243 AD. It's called the Children's Crusade. Pope Innocent IV received, as a gift, a moorish princess, who was all of like 15 years old.

Tirston slides Arthur's shot to him, one eyebrow rising with curiosity.

TIRSTON

Nice set up.

ARTHUR

And it's strongly rumored, in some anti-Catholic writings, that the Pope gave the girl a gift when he left Rome. A cast of his own penis in solid gold.

TIRSTON

Gold is a soft metal.

ARTHUR

Probably had some silver mixed in. My point is, it's rumored the casting of the Pope's member fell into the hands of Jack Kane sometime around '78 or 9.

Tirston suddenly brightens up.

TIRSTON

Oy! Bingo! I got it. Mysterious death: blunt object, gold dildo... goddam POPE?!

Relief spreads across his face. Tirston pours more shots, laughing under his breath. He presses a button and the train whistle BLOWS.

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ARTHUR

No one ever found the murder weapon.
Until now, no one ever really understood
why Jack Kane was killed.

On top of the conversation again, Tirston raises a hand, much the same as Arthur's editor did, earlier.

TIRSTON

Where do you hope to sell this, Arthur?
Because I can tell you, *The New Yorker*
stopped doing Pope dildo murder weapon
filler when Tina Brown left.

ARTHUR

This is bigger than *The New Yorker*, okay?
Who cares about a bunch of ivy league
trust-fund babies?

TIRSTON

Not me. Fuck the east coast.

ARTHUR

This is about a man who was murdered. For
an item the Vatican will not admit even
exists.

Tirston grows patronizing, patting Arthur's hand, pointing to the shot that waits for him.

TIRSTON

Art... I like it, don't get me wrong. But
commercially speaking it's a lead boat.
Think like a publisher: the center of
your mystery is something that can never
be printed on the cover of a book. It's a
gold *dick*.

ARTHUR

Of which you deny all knowledge?

TIRSTON

Good hustle. But listen to an ex-writer.
It sucks bro. Change the dildo to a gold
bar from Fort Knox or a gold scepter from
the royal family. Women go apeshit over
royalty.

ARTHUR

You can't just rewrite this?!

<--- SNIP -- Scene continues --->