

“Cut the Parrot”

By

Donigan Cumming

CUT THE PARROT BY DONIGAN CUMMING

Characters

Gerry

Gerald Harvey, a man in his sixties

Donigan

Donigan Cumming, a forty-nine-year-old man with a camcorder

Geoff

Geoffrey Bates, a man in his sixties

Beatrice

Beatrice Johnson, a woman in her seventies

Elizabeth

Elizabeth Barclay, a woman in her forties

Susan

Susan Thomson, a woman in her forties

Jimmy

James Carter, a man in his forties

Alex

Gordon Alexander, a man in his fifties

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FADE IN

INT CLOSE SHOT DONIGAN'S STUDIO GERRY DAY

Gerry's right foot, with an overgrown and yellowing toenail, is resting on a large calendar.

GEOFF (VO)

Never...In all the history of mankind have I ever seen so much and yet so few.

DONIGAN (VO)

Scratch your head a lot. It's good,

INT MEDIUM SHOT ALBERT'S APARTMENT LIVING ROOM

The camera slowly PANS to two pairs of shoes on a carpet. The camera pans from the shoes to the carpet, and then back to the shoes.

DONIGAN (VO)

the way you were scratching your head. You had your other arm up too. You were just like...Did he do that?

GEOFF (VO)

No.

DONIGAN (VO)

That's just you.

GEOFF (VO)

Laurel and Hardy used to do that. Remember them?

DONIGAN (VO)

Yes I do.

GEOFF (VO)

We shall fight, defend our shores. We shall defend...Britain shall always remain.
Long live Britain

The camera ZOOMS IN on a burn mark on the tile floor.

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GEOFF (VO)

and the Union Jack.

DONIGAN (VO)

Geoff, talk to Albert as if you were Churchill and you were trying to straighten out some problem he was having.

GEOFF (VO)

You mean talk to Albert?

DONIGAN (VO)

Yeah, and you were Winston...You came in and there was Albert, over there, and you were Winston.

INT CLOSE SHOT WATCH DONIGAN

Donigan's hand seen holding a watch. The light reflects off the crystal. Slow motion.

DONIGAN (VO)

And you were, maybe you were talking to Albert about the war or something or whatever.

GEOFF (VO)

When I was on the shore of the Rhine, Albert, with General George Patton, we opened up the second front.

The watch is hung on the knob of a dresser. Slow motion.

GEOFF (VO)

And there the enemy blasted us. But Patton stood by.

Donigan's hand is seen opening the top drawer of the dresser. Inside the drawer are pill bottles, sunglasses, receipts, and other pieces of paper. Slow motion.

GEOFF (VO)

And you should have seen him, Albert, with his men fighting on. And I stood on the shores of the Rhine watching Patton and his men fight. They stood, they stood there and just fired on the enemy. The enemy retreated quickly and Patton chased him and his men,

The camera pans to a table on which there is a collection of plastic horses in disarray, some lying on their sides, along with a bouquet of red plastic flowers. Slow motion.

GEOFF (VO)

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chased him up the Rhine into the Saarland. It was some sight. Albert. I wish you had of been there, you would have enjoyed it.

INT CLOSE SHOT BANK BOOK LIVING ROOM

Donigan's hand is seen flipping through the bank book, hesitating on each page. The camera pans to the top of the last page, where four transactions are noted between November 1, 1995, and December 4, 1995.

INT CLOSE SHOT PHOTOGRAPH

The scene changes. Donigan's hand is seen holding a wallet-sized colour photograph of a middle-aged man and woman, both wearing glasses. MUSIC and recorded LAUGHTER can be heard. Donigan flips the photograph over. Written on the back is "May 1970 Love from sister Mildred Best wishes Chuck." The camera zooms in on the inscription. The LAUGHTER continues. The camera pans to the right of the living room. The walls are highly decorated with cards, decorative plates, calendars, and photographs. The camera pans to a checkered tablecloth. We see a lamp, an ashtray, a rubber glove, and several pieces of paper.

MALE VOICE LAUGHING (VO RECORDING)

This is the end. The end.

The camera zooms in on a flyer with the slogan "Do You Love Me?" Beside the flyer is the name tag of Albert Smith, identifying him as a resident at "Lucien L'Allier."

INT CLOSE SHOT DONIGAN'S OFFICE DONIGAN

DONIGAN

The police phoned me late at night. They told me that Ra...

Donigan looks down.

DONIGAN

The 'lice...

Donigan looks at the camera.

DONIGAN

The police phoned me. They left a message on the machine. Said he was dead. Said he was at the morgue. So what, the morgue? I went down to see his room. I was very sorry he was gone. I missed the little fucker. In fact, I needed him, needed him really bad. And I'd hope that I would be able to use him again. I needed him and now he was dead. I went down to see the room. There wasn't much left, really. Son-of-a-bitch. I wish he was

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alive. A few weeks later they phoned me from the morgue. They wanted me come down and ID the body. They had been looking for his relatives. Nobody wanted him. Nobody. Couldn't find anybody. There was a sister somewhere, something like that. Some goddamn sister. Couldn't find her. Couldn't find dick all. Couldn't find anybody. They were gonna put him in Potter's Field. Wanting me, wanted me, to make sure that he was...Who they thought he was. So I went down to the morgue. Somebody came down and got me and brought me up to the Coroner's office. He was a big guy. Big fat guy. He had two Polaroids face down on his desk. Slid the first one over at me and then kind of flipped it up like a card. They had snapped it downstairs. It was Albert. He looked terrible. I said, "Yeah, that's him. Can I see the other one?" Shoved the other one over. That's when I looked down, looked close. He was shoving those damn Polaroids across a field of baby pictures and family photos that were all underneath the goddamn blotter on his desk. It was the strangest thing and I was sorry I didn't have a camera. Shit. So...I looked at 'em, I looked at 'em both for as long as I thought I could. Kept pulling the Polaroid into focus and then the goddamn...goddamn table top, that spread of pictures into focus...bom bom. I go boom, boom, boom, boom. Wondered what I was gonna do, I wanted to see him. I wanted to see him. I says, "Can you take me downstairs? Can you take me downstairs and show him to me?" He said, "Oh sure, sure. Come on, let's go." So I went downstairs. Went into this little room. This curtain on one wall. He pulled the curtain and there was Albert on the other side all wrapped up in white plastic, except for his head, it was tilted towards me. Been in he freezer for about four weeks. It didn't look too goddamn good. Tongue was all yellow. Sticking out. Lopped off to one side [of the] like this, you know. Jesus Christ. I chatted up the Coroner, you know. Wondered what the autopsy had said, whether it was a heart attack, or what the hell had happened to the boy. Well, just stood there. Plate glass. Me and the Coroner, and Albert...dead four weeks. God, he looked bad. But it was certainly Albert. And he was certainly dead. Dead, dead, dead, dead, dead. Then I left. I left and I came home. I left and I came home. I wonder. I wonder what the sense is, you know. I wonder. Shit. Shit. Shit.

INT CLOSE SHOT GERRY

Gerry is looking down. The camera pans to the right and zooms in on Gerry's left hand. Gerry taps his fingers on the armrest.

GERRY

But I think the apartment's already rented. That goddamn bugger, wanted to suck me off.

FADE OUT

FADE IN

INT CLOSE SHOT DONIGAN'S STUDIO GERRY DAY

The camera PANS across the bare wooden floor and chair legs.

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GERRY (OS)

So, that Saturday, the landlord, he went out to the Steinberg's to do some shopping. So, he says, the landlord is coming down.

The camera pans to Gerry, sitting. Gerry is in his fifties or sixties. He has greying hair and a moustache. His voice is raspy and he speaks with a lisp. Gerry is wearing a purple shirt.

GERRY

He let him in. So the landlord came down, the janitor's up to the Steinberg's doing his shopping. The landlord came down. He says, "Who are you?" I say, "Well, I'm a new tenant downstairs." "Oh, what's your name?"

The camera zooms in on Gerry's face. The camera pans to Gerry's mouth.

GERRY

I told him. He says, "I want to ask you something, is all the rooms filled?"

The camera zooms out slightly.

GERRY

I says, "As far as I know, I don't know."

The camera zooms in slightly.

GERRY

So the rooms were all filled. But what the janitor was doing, he was sucking the guys off and giving them free rent. Anyway, the landlord didn't know that. So, he had a guy there, a young French guy. Of course, I don't know

Gerry runs his hand over his face.

GERRY

if he was fucking the janitor up the ass or what. Or the janitor was sucking him off. Anyway, he was staying there 'bout a month, a month or two and he was paying no rent. So, a week or so passed, the landlord came back. And of course, I knew then the rooms were all filled. He says, "All the rooms filled?" He says, "I'm having time, hard time to rent rooms there. They won't stay." "Oh, yeah?" I knew what was wrong but I didn't want to tell the landlord. So one day, there's a little small, in that hotel there was a small snack bar.

Gerry's raises his left arm behind his head.

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GERRY

So this guy was, that the janitor was sucking off, or he was fucking him up the ass or something, he was in the coffee shop having a cup of coffee. And the landlord went in to have a cup of coffee. So, uh, he says, "ain't you the one that, uh...hey you owe me some money." So this French kid said, "What do you mean I, who are you?" He says, "I own that house over there. You owe me money. You stayed in one of the rooms upstairs." He says, "I don't owe you nothing." He says, "Well, you stayed there, you didn't pay no rent." He says, "No, I didn't have to. I was getting sucked off. And I was fucking your janitor up the arse." Christ, I was there. Oh, Christ, I felt the man was going to pass out.

INT CLOSE SHOT DONIGAN'S OFFICE DONIGAN

DONIGAN

Gerry sent me upstairs once, you know, and to photograph a guy lived above them. He had a room up there and he knew that guy was gonna try and rape me, he just knew it. And he was so amused. And he did. I held him off. Took his picture anyway. They were good pictures. Next time I saw him he was up in the psychiatric ward at the General. Not much left of him. He'd been a priest. Just everything had gone wrong. God, when he grabbed me between the legs...Thought I'd right...jump out of the window, it hurt so much. Aggressive, some of these guys. Really aggressive. Just gotta stand your ground. Shoot 'em down. Only way, only way.

INT CLOSE SHOT DONIGAN'S STUDIO GERRY

Gerry is sitting, naked, covering his penis with his left hand. Gerry can only be seen from his belly to his knees.

GERRY & DONIGAN (OS) (SINGING)

What a friend we have in Jesus. All our sins and griefs to bear. What a privilege to carry everything to God in prayer. Have we trials and temptations. Is there trouble anywhere? We should never be discouraged. Take it to the Lord in prayer. Are we weak and heavy laden, cumbered with a load of care. What a...privilege to carry...

The camera ZOOMS IN on Gerry's hand.

GERRY & DONIGAN (OS) (SINGING)

take it to the Lord in prayer."

INT CLOSE SHOT ALBERT'S APARTMENT GEOFF

Geoff, who is short, wrinkled, and wearing thick-rimmed glasses, stands in front of a wall hung with decorative plates. The room is evenly lit. Geoff waves his hand at the camera.

CUT THE PARROT BY DONIGAN CUMMING

GEOFF

Yeah, I was just gonna say that. Let me deal with it.

DONIGAN (OS)

Yeah. Okay, okay.

Geoff wears a pained expression. He hangs his head.

GEOFF

Albert Smith was sitting in his usual place at the table, and he was just sitting there, meditating. And all of a sudden he felt nauseating pains. Didn't know what it was. Then, he decided maybe he should go and lie down. As he got up he had a cigarette going and he walked over towards his bed. But he never made it. He got to the couch, bed, and he stumbled and fell. And that was the last time Albert...sat at the table. As he fell down, his cigarette hand went down towards the floor.

The camera PANS down Geoff's arm to his hand, which is holding a cigarette. The camera tracks out. To the left of Geoff is ELIZABETH, SITTING on the ground, also SMOKING.

GEOFF

To this burn...And of course, it burnt his fingers. But Albert was dead at the time. And that's...this burn is in memory of Albert. His last burn.

The camera pans down from Geoff's hand, to a SIAMESE CAT that APPEARS from behind Geoff, sniffs his foot, then sniffs the cigarette ashes around Albert's cigarette burn.

GEOFF

Well, it wasn't for hours before his body was discovered. A neighbour got suspicious. He was pronounced dead, right away.

The camera zooms in on the cigarette in Elizabeth's right hand, next to the cigarette ashes around Albert's burn.

GEOFF

Well, that's the story about this burn. And now we are looking at it. We not only see a burn, we see Albert with his finger clutched to his cigarette and slowly burning away. So,

The camera zooms in on the cigarette ashes around Albert's burn.

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GEOFF

that's the story about this burn. And now we are looking at it. It is a memory of Albert.

INT CLOSE SHOT DONIGAN'S OFFICE DONIGAN

Donigan's teeth are clenched.

DONIGAN

I wanted not to find the body. I didn't want to find the goddamn body. The body was in there. It was behind those damn doors. It had been there ten hours. Nobody knew...that ten hours had passed since the time of death, but it still had been ten hours. Nobody had missed him for eight of them and then they began to miss him. And then they knocked on the door and there was no answer. And then they went in there and they found him curled up on his hide-a-bed. One arm trailing on the floor. A cigarette burnt out between his fingers. His last cigarette and his last burn. Then they called the cops. Then they called the Coroner. Then they called the people to pick him up and they took him out of there. And they took him downtown. And they put him on ice. And they tried to find somebody that wanted him.

Donigan LAUGHS.

DONIGAN

Nobody wanted him. They looked and looked. Goddamn. They couldn't find anything. He was RIP. It was RIP. But wasn't Albert's Ripstone up the street. No. It was RIP. He was RIP, total RIP down there. And that's it. And when I saw him he had been there for four weeks and he was cold. Very very cold. And he looked bad. Yellow tongue. Not like this one.

Donigan sticks out his tongue.

DONIGAN

No, no. He had a yellow one.

Donigan LAUGHS.

DONIGAN

A beard had grown out on his face the way it does. I guess his nails had grown a little bit. He had been kept cool. Kept very, very cool.

INT MEDIUM SHOT GEOFF'S APARTMENT BEATRICE GEOFF ELIZABETH

Beatrice is in her seventies with short grey hair and bags under her eyes. Elizabeth is in her forties and

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has dark brown hair. The three of them sit together with Geoff in the middle. Beatrice and Elizabeth begin to HUM "Amazing Grace."

GEOFF

Can we hum that? The three of us?

Geoff begins to HUM. He is off-tune. He coughs, and continues HUMMING. The scene changes. Beatrice and Elizabeth are HUMMING and holding on to Geoff.

GEOFF

Since his absence, downstairs in the basement,

The camera zooms in on Geoff.

GEOFF

his door is closed all the time. While he was here his door was open and anyone could go into his place and they were welcomed. He never refused anyone. And he was always giving 'em cigarettes or stuff like that. And when it come to community suppers, he was always willing to offer his stove or any other kitchen apparel. That's what Albert was like. Now he's gone. His door is closed. There's an emptiness. And there's no more happiness or any more joyful. Well, it's too bad and we'll all miss Albert. And we'll always think of him as a saint. As a man that loved music, loved biblical movies and loved everyone. And he always had a smile on his face. We have a picture in the common room with him, with a smile on his face. And he's probably still smiling and looking after us. Well, that's Albert Smith. Thank you very much.

The scene changes. Beatrice is HUMMING "Amazing Grace" in a higher tune. Elizabeth holds on to Geoff's shoulder.

GEOFF

And I know that he is amongst the angels. We pray every day for Albert that his soul is in heaven now amongst...next to Christ. He used to talk about Christ a lot, and what it would be like in heaven. He said there would be a lot of singing, and a lot of merriment. Well, Albert's up there with Christ by his side. And he is so happy when he smiles and he sings that he must be a blessing up in heaven with the angels and with Jesus Christ.

The camera zooms in on Geoff's mouth and stubbled chin.

GEOFF

Well, we miss Albert, yes. But where Albert is, I imagine he is so happy and so joyful because he always wanted to know what heaven was like. Well now he knows with the angels and Jesus Christ, amen.

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The camera zooms out.

INT MEDIUM SHOT BEATRICE GEOFF ELIZABETH

Beatrice is HUMMING "Amazing Grace."

GEOFF

Well, here I go again about Albert.

INT CLOSE SHOT DONIGAN

Donigan is looking up.

DONIGAN

Now, my uncle used to tell me a story. He used to tell me that life was like a big field, a big open field. Mile and miles and miles wide. Stretching to the horizon and there were lines across this field and they were all stone walls. Each of those walls was usually about five, six feet taller than a human being. Say ten feet in average. And all we did all our life long was kinda run from one wall to the next. And we'd hit a wall, and scramble over it, fall down the other side and keep going to the next wall. That's right. It's a dumb story. Actually my uncle didn't tell it to me. Some idiotic friend of mine has this theory that you gotta get over those walls and sometimes you're bleeding, and scarred, and bruised, and flop down the other side. And you have just enough time to breathe a sigh of relief and you head on to the next one. As you get older, you get more and more dazed. More of a scramble to get over 'em. You get bloodier and more bruised. But you gotta get over. You gotta get over. When you get over, there's another wall. But that's life, see. Great theory. It's called the wall theory. My uncle did have a story. He told me how the boys up in the hills north of Atlanta, did not like the idea of the war between the States. Not one damn bit.

INT MEDIUM SHOT GEOFF'S APARTMENT GEOFF DAY

Geoff is standing, looking up at the ceiling. Light comes in from the window, throwing a SHADOW on Geoff.

GEOFF

You're probably playing a harp up there, who knows? As they say most angels play harps.

The camera ZOOMS IN on Geoff's face. The shadow on Geoff's face become darker.

GEOFF

Well, you should know...

CUT THE PARROT BY DONIGAN CUMMING

The sound of Geoff TALKING is MUTED. Geoff is viewed from above.

GEOFF (VO)

We opened up the second front and there the enemy blasted us. But Patton stood by. You should've seen him, Albert, with his men fighting on. And I stood on the shores of the Rhine watching Patton and his men fight. They stood...they stood there and just fired on the enemy. The enemy retreated quickly.

The sound of Geoff TALKING returns.

GEOFF

That's it, Albert. Amen.

Geoff stares at the camera, then stares in front of him. The camera pans to the left of Geoff, profile view.

INT MEDIUM SHOT SUSAN'S APARTMENT SUSAN DAY

Susan is seen from behind sitting in a chair in front of the window, LAUGHING. The camera PANS away from Susan, to the left, across the parquet floor, over the table, and around to the front of Susan. She is overweight, wearing pink pants and a pink-and white-striped jersey. Her two front teeth are missing.

SUSAN

Oh, I'm taking a seizure. I need a pill. A seizure.

The camera pans above Susan's head, to the back of the room where JIMMY ENTERS and walks across the room.

JIMMY

Okay. Hold on, hold on. Okay.

Susan stands up, with her arms in the air and her mouth wide open, SCREAMING.

SUSAN

A seizure.

Susan falls to the ground and begins to convulse. Her legs and arms move back and forth. She is breathing heavily and screaming.

JIMMY

Sit down, sit down. Okay, hold on, hold on. Okay, okay. SHHH. Okay, OK. OK good. Sit up. Sit up. Here. Get yourself up. Get yourself up. Susan, sit up, OK.

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Jimmy puts a plastic cup next to Susan and attempts to raise Susan's arms.

Sit up. JIMMY

Susan slaps the floor.

I can't get her up. JIMMY

INT CLOSE SHOT EYE LEVEL SUSAN'S APARTMENT SUSAN DAY

The camera tilts, pans and tracks around Susan's face and features. Throughout the scene, Susan's eyes follow Donigan, rather than looking directly into the camera.

DONIGAN (OS)
Can you tell me that. You tell me that happy story now, okay?

Oh, the happy s... SUSAN

The happy story, the happy story. DONIGAN (OS)

Um, what kind of story. My life, you mean? SUSAN

Yeah, yeah. From your life. Yeah, yeah. DONIGAN (OS)

I'm always happy, down to earth. I don't like crying. I never will. Never did. I just like being happy, you know? And...Enjoying life, you know what I mean? And doing the best I can. And I like my place. I mean, you know, for the time being, 'til we get somewhere else. I mean, I don't let nothin' bother me, nothing gets to me. SUSAN

Get along well with Jimmy? DONIGAN (OS)

I sure do. SUSAN

Yeah? DONIGAN (OS)

Yes, I do. SUSAN

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DONIGAN (OS)

What's a good thing about him?

SUSAN

Oh, he's fun going, you know. And makes me laugh. You know, cheerful. You know, I mean when you laugh it's not easy to get out of it. I'm telling you, you know. He's a funny guy. He's good.

DONIGAN (OS)

Where does he get his sense of humour from? What the hell is it?

SUSAN

The things he comes out. Like Albert said. You know. Like Albert told me, the things he - Oh, he gets Albert going.

DONIGAN (OS)

Yeah.

SUSAN

Yeah, you know. He's, he's a good person. He's joy...you know, he makes you laugh a lot.

DONIGAN (OS)

What would you do if somebody tried to hurt Jimmy?

SUSAN (worried, shaking her head)

I don't want that, you know. You know that, eh, Don?

DONIGAN (OS)

Oh, I do know that.

SUSAN

You're not joking about that are you?

DONIGAN (OS)

I'm not joking about it.

SUSAN

Albert knows that I love Jimmy a lot. Albert will tell you. Because them two are close friends, you know what I mean?

DONIGAN (OS)

Yeah.

SUSAN

I could never see bad happening to Jimmy, you know.

Susan's eyes brim with tears.

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SUSAN

You know that, eh?

DONIGAN (OS)

I do know that Susan.

SUSAN

I've been with him a long time, you know. You know that. I never went with another guy. Every time you come here it's the same guy.

DONIGAN (OS)

You never thought about it either, eh?

SUSAN

No. I don't want another man cause I'm afraid I might get hurt. You know. Like you wouldn't hurt your woman, would you?

DONIGAN (OS)

No. Absolutely not.

SUSAN

No. There's some man will do that.

DONIGAN (OS)

I know some men will. Have you ever had a bad time like that?

SUSAN

Yes I did. I really did. I'm being honest with you.

DONIGAN (OS)

So, it would be pretty difficult if you lost Jimmy then?

SUSAN

Don't say nothing. I'll tell you who it is.

DONIGAN (OS)

Okay.

SUSAN

Charlie. You know, Jimmy's brother.

DONIGAN (OS)

Oh god.

SUSAN

Oh yes he did. Bad beating...

DONIGAN (OS)

What did he do to you?

SUSAN

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You know, did you ever meet...see him?

DONIGAN (OS)

No, I never met Charlie.

SUSAN

Oh, he was bad, he was...he put a bad number on me almost. Him and Jimmy. Me and Jimmy.

DONIGAN (OS)

Uh huh.

SUSAN

Yes he did. He's terrible.

DONIGAN (OS)

What did he try to do to you?

SUSAN

Tried to...he slapped me across the face. I seen stars.

DONIGAN (OS)

Uh huh.

SUSAN

And I took a seizure on top of it.

DONIGAN (OS)

Oh, jeez.

SUSAN

And he really was bad. Jimmy sent him to court though.

DONIGAN (OS)

Was that...Did you have a seizure before he hit you or after that?

SUSAN

After that and then I felt something coming on, yeah. But Jimmy sent him to the court. Next time he does that I tell you man, I will call the cops.

DONIGAN (OS)

Is he still alive?

SUSAN

Yeah, he is.

DONIGAN (OS)

Charlie's alive. He's not the brother that died?

SUSAN

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Tommy.

DONIGAN (OS)

Oh, okay, Tommy.

SUSAN

The other one. But Jimmy's close to that one, his other one. Him and Tommy. Yeah, that's his favourite. Charlie is very bad. He smokes up all kinds of things. Not just cigarettes, you know like...not all kind, maybe just...I don't know if he still does.

DONIGAN (OS)

Is that the only time something like that happened?

The camera tracks out to a MEDIUM SHOT of Susan who is seen to be wearing a lapel mike, clipped to her jersey, then moves back to a close shot.

SUSAN

It happened to me on ahh...You know that place on...Oh, I forget. We used to live somewhere not far, but...On Cheers. You know where Cheers Street is? You know Cheers? There's a home there. Like ah...It's like a place, you rent it. It's like a room and you rent, you know.

DONIGAN (OS)

Uh huh.

SUSAN

He hit me right there.

DONIGAN (OS)

On the street or in a house?

SUSAN

In that place. Bad, very bad. And the police came.

DONIGAN (OS)

He didn't try and get Jimmy though?

SUSAN

Oh, he did. If he would've touched Jimmy, I would've called the cops.

DONIGAN (OS)

Yeah, yeah.

SUSAN

You know, Jimmy means a lot to me. And I took a nervous breakdown over him too. Long time ago. That's how much I love him.

DONIGAN (OS)

So, there's no hurt for Jimmy?

SUSAN

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No, no.

DONIGAN (OS)

No way.

SUSAN

No, no. I can't...

DONIGAN (OS)

No way ever?

Susan shakes her head.

SUSAN

No, I love him so much. He means a lot to me. It's painful, you know. Very painful. I suffer so much, you know. That's how bad I was.

DONIGAN (OS)

What? Just think about losing him, you mean?

SUSAN

Yeah, yeah.

DONIGAN (OS)

Yeah. Yeah.

SUSAN

You won't let that happen to Jimmy, eh?

DONIGAN (OS)

You never want him hurt.

SUSAN

No. You don't like that either, eh?

DONIGAN (OS)

No. I don't like the idea at all.

SUSAN

Cause him and Albert are close friends.

DONIGAN (OS)

Well, they were close friends.

SUSAN

Eh?

DONIGAN (OS)

They were.

CUT THE PARROT BY DONIGAN CUMMING

SUSAN

Yeah, they were. And I seen Jimmy go see Albert a lot. I did.

DONIGAN (OS)

Yeah.

SUSAN

He's more free with Albert than Gerry. If you ever noticed a difference, you know what I mean?

DONIGAN (OS)

He's cooler with Gerry, I think, eh?

SUSAN

Who? Jimmy, yeah. But Albert is like a brother to Jimmy, in a way. 'Cause Jimmy goes to see him sometimes, a lot.

DONIGAN (OS)

Yeah, yeah.

SUSAN

Oh, yeah. But Jimmy puts ah...he put a bad beatin' on me and Jimmy.

DONIGAN (OS)

So, no pain for Jimmy?

SUSAN

Eh?

DONIGAN (OS)

No pain for Jimmy?

SUSAN

No. But Jimmy knocked...Jimmy put him in the court for that, for not to do that to me again. The next time, he will go to jail.

DONIGAN (OS)

How long have you two been together for?

SUSAN

Oh, ahh...I don't know. I think it's thirty-six years.

DONIGAN (OS)

36?

SUSAN

Or 25 years.

DONIGAN (OS)

CUT THE PARROT BY DONIGAN CUMMING

25, yeah.

SUSAN

Something like that.

DONIGAN (OS)

Yeah.

SUSAN

It's a long time. I'll never leave him cause if anything ever does...I'm not wishing it. I'm not living with no other man. No other man. No.

Susan pauses.

SUSAN (cont'd)

Just me, alone. Cause I don't trust a man...well, I'm afraid he might hurt me. You know what I mean? And I don't trust that, I'll live on my own with the Lord that I believe in.

Susan shakes her head.

SUSAN (cont'd)

That's all I can say, no more other man for me. No.

DONIGAN (OS)

Have you ever come close to losing Jimmy?

SUSAN

I'd feel bad if something ever does happen.

DONIGAN (OS)

But you've never come close to losing him?

SUSAN

What does that mean?

DONIGAN (OS)

Well, I mean nothing bad has ever happened that's gotten very close to taking Jimmy from you.

SUSAN

Oh, you mean for that part?

DONIGAN (OS)

Yeah.

SUSAN

No, he's not like that. He wouldn't do that to me. But you...like you. You wouldn't, would you leave your woman? No, eh?

CUT THE PARROT BY DONIGAN CUMMING

DONIGAN (OS)

No.

SUSAN

Well, you're not married to her, are you?

DONIGAN (OS)

Yes I am.

SUSAN

Are you really married?

DONIGAN (OS)

Yes, I am.

SUSAN

In the paper? Oh, I thought you were like me, in the common law.

DONIGAN (OS)

No, I was for a long time but then I did it.

SUSAN

Oh, you really are married to her.

DONIGAN (OS)

Then I did it, yeah.

SUSAN

You weren't thinking of leaving her, are you?

DONIGAN (OS)

No, I'm not thinking about it.

SUSAN

Oh, that's the same thing for me and Jimmy. Well, we're not married through really. We're like common...Well, we are married in a way.

DONIGAN (OS)

Yeah, I understand. The law recognizes, a common law...

SUSAN

We should get married though. We're supposed to, you know.

DONIGAN (OS)

You think so?

SUSAN

Well, they don't bother with that too much, really.

DONIGAN (OS)

Um hum. Yeah.

CUT THE PARROT BY DONIGAN CUMMING

SUSAN

I don't...you love your woman too?

DONIGAN (OS)

Yes, I do.

SUSAN

In your deep heart.

DONIGAN (OS)

Yup.

SUSAN

I'm sure she's good to you.

DONIGAN (OS)

She is.

SUSAN

But if she saw me talking to you alone...that's what I'm worried about.

DONIGAN (OS)

Well, I think she'd be able to deal with that.

SUSAN

Cause some women are jealous, you know.

DONIGAN (OS)

Well some of them are. But ah...

SUSAN

But...she saw me right here, alone with you...that's what hurts me. And I'm talking to you alone.

DONIGAN (OS)

Yeah, yeah.

SUSAN

Then what are you...Then what are you gonna say?

Susan pauses.

SUSAN (cont'd)

Hey, I have a man here. I don't need another man.

DONIGAN (OS)

Yeah, yeah. Of course.

SUSAN

Some women are like that.

CUT THE PARROT BY DONIGAN CUMMING

DONIGAN (OS)

Some women are crazy.

SUSAN

That's what I mean. Your wife saw me here...

DONIGAN (OS)

She's not crazy.

SUSAN

Is she jealous over you?

DONIGAN (OS)

Ahh...not in a bad way. No. Not in a bad way at all.

SUSAN

You know, that's no good for her, eh. That's no good to be jealous, really.

DONIGAN (OS)

No. It isn't. No.

SUSAN

If she's jealous over you, is she?

DONIGAN (OS)

No, no.

SUSAN

Is she a nice person?

DONIGAN (OS)

Yes she is.

SUSAN

If Jimmy talks to some woman alone and he knows the person, I'm not jealous over him. Never.

DONIGAN (OS)

You never feel a thing?

SUSAN

No. Not a...cause I trust him

DONIGAN (OS)

Yeah.

SUSAN

I trust him. I'm sure your girl trusts you.

CUT THE PARROT BY DONIGAN CUMMING

DONIGAN (OS)

Yeah, I think she trusts me.

SUSAN

You know, that's what I mean. If she saw me alone here, and says "what are you doing with that woman?" Well, then, figure that out. What are you gonna say to her? What are you gonna say? You tell me that. I like you as a good friend, I really do. I'm just thinking about your woman. What is she gonna say if she saw you here with me alone?

DONIGAN (OS)

She's fine. She knows I'm working. I'm working.

SUSAN

Well, she's not thinking nothing else, eh?

DONIGAN (OS)

No, nothing else, nothing else.

SUSAN

Cause I'll tell her. I don't want another man. I've got my own.

DONIGAN (OS)

Yeah.

SUSAN

And that's how strongly I am

DONIGAN (OS)

Well, she'd understand that.

SUSAN

Well, you don't tell every woman that. Believe me. You don't say that to every woman, you know.

DONIGAN (OS)

Is that right?

SUSAN

Oh yeah. There's some jealousy around this world.

DONIGAN (OS)

Well, I think that may be true. It may be true.

SUSAN

You know, don't tell every woman that.

DONIGAN (OS)

Yeah.

SUSAN

No, not at all. Don't tell anybody's woman that cause I know, I've been around. I'm not

CUT THE PARROT BY DONIGAN CUMMING

jealous with Jimmy whatsoever. I trust him. He can do what he wants. Cause he knows what to say if...some women are funny. I'm not worried at all. Not at all. That's good, eh? If you trust somebody?

DONIGAN (OS)

It is good if you trust somebody.

SUSAN

Yeah

DONIGAN (OS)

Very good.

SUSAN

Yeah.

SUSAN (cont'd)
(confidentially)

But I didn't know you were married.

DONIGAN (OS)

Surprised?

SUSAN

Well, no. I thought you were just common law.

DONIGAN (OS)

No, no.

SUSAN

But, really, in the paper?

DONIGAN (OS)

No, really in the paper.

SUSAN

Ah, your...I didn't know. Congratulations.

DONIGAN (OS)

Thank you very much.

SUSAN

I didn't know that. I thought you were just common law.

DONIGAN (OS)

No, no. Lucky guy.

Donigan LAUGHS. Susan smiles and points at Donigan.

CUT THE PARROT BY DONIGAN CUMMING

SUSAN

Oh, get. Don't start, okay? Don't start.

DONIGAN (OS)

I'm a lucky guy.

SUSAN

Okay? No, I didn't say that. Don't start.

DONIGAN (OS)

Okay, I won't start.

SUSAN

I'm a lucky...Okay here we go again. No, that's you...remember that. You're a lucky guy.

SUSAN

Yeah, you sure are. Maybe she loves you.

DONIGAN (OS)

You should do "Que sera."

SUSAN

Oh I can sing everything.

DONIGAN (OS)

Do it.

SUSAN

Don't start laughing, eh? Okay? Because I know you. You said something there I know..."Que sera?"

SUSAN (SINGING)

"When I was just a little girl, I asked my mother what shall I be? Will I be pretty? Will I be rich? There's what she said to me. Que sera, sera, whatever will be, will be. The future's not ours to see, que sera, sera, what will be, will be. Now I have children of my own, they ask their mothers, what shall they be? Will they be pretty, will they be rich? There's what she said to me, que sera, sera, whatever will be, will be. The future's not ours to see, que sera, sera, what will be, will be. Que sera, sera."

The camera tilts down to Susan's chest, holding on the lapel mike and a buttonhole which has a tuft of black hair caught in it. A CHAIN SAW gets louder and louder.

INT MEDIUM SHOT DONIGAN'S STUDIO ALEX GERRY DAY

ALEX and Gerry are standing. Alex, balding, with glasses, wears a pink and purple striped jersey with a lapel mike. The chain saw continues.

CUT THE PARROT BY DONIGAN CUMMING

DONIGAN (OS)

Okay, we're going to do it with the saw. It's fine. Okay. Hit it, start singing.

The camera ZOOMS in on Alex's head. He stares into the camera.

ALEX (SINGING SLOWLY)

"You can't be true dear, there's nothing else to say I trust in you, dear hoping you'll find the way. Your kisses telling that you and I are through, though I kept loving you, although you can't be true. Look to the moon and then look to the sun, oh look to the stars where life has begun..."

DONIGAN (yelling OS)

Gerry, get in on it. Stop this guy.

GERRY (OS)

Okay.

ALEX (SINGING)

But there's one thing to tell you...

The camera zooms out so that Alex and Gerry can be seen.

GERRY

Would you mind, would you mind stopping your singing.

DONIGAN (yelling OS)

Get him to stop Gerry.

GERRY

Stop your singing.

DONIGAN (OS)

Get him to goddamn stop.

GERRY

Stop your singing.

DONIGAN (yelling OS)

Jesus, Gerry. Stop him!

GERRY

Stop your singing. You're disturbing the peace.

The camera pans to Alex.

ALEX (SINGING MORE QUICKLY)

CUT THE PARROT BY DONIGAN CUMMING

You can't be true dear...

DONIGAN (yelling OS)
Get closer to him. Shake him, get a hand on him. Stop him.

Gerry enters the scene and puts his hand on Alex's shoulder, shaking him.

GERRY
Stop your singing. You're disturbing the peace.

DONIGAN (yelling OS)
Put a hand over his mouth. Stop him, stop him, Gerry. Get him...stop him. Gerry.

GERRY
Stop your singing. You're disturbing the peace.

DONIGAN (yelling OS)
Gerry, Gerry. Stop him. Gag him, gag him.

Gerry puts his hands around Alex's neck.

DONIGAN (yelling OS)
Gerry. You gotta stop him, Gerry. Gerry, stop him. Good god Gerry.

ALEX (SINGING)
..."I'll find a way..."

GERRY
Stop the singing you're disturbing the peace.

Donigan LAUGHING can be heard.

ALEX (SINGING)
... "your kisses tell you that.."

GERRY
You'll wake the dead.

DONIGAN (yelling OS)
Shake him up, Gerry. You've got to make him quit.

GERRY
Stop, stop, stop, stop your singing.

DONIGAN (OS)

CUT THE PARROT BY DONIGAN CUMMING

He's out of control, Gerry. Get in there, Gerry. Push harder.

Gerry shakes Alex. Alex begins swinging his arms. He is still fixed on the camera.

DONIGAN (yelling OS)
You've got to get in there, got to get in there and stop him.

GERRY
Stop your singing. You'll raise up the dead.

DONIGAN (yelling OS)
Gerry, Gerry, you gotta stop him. Gerry, Gerry, do something.

ALEX (SINGING FASTER)
You can't be true, dear...

GERRY
Stop your singing, you're waking [up] the dead.

DONIGAN (yelling OS)
Do something, for Christ's sake, Gerry.

GERRY
Stop your singing.

Alex is dancing for the camera.

DONIGAN (yelling OS)
Louder! Louder!

GERRY
Stop your singing. You're disturbing the peace.

DONIGAN (yelling OS)
Gerry.

ALEX (SINGING FASTER)
Your kisses tell me...

GERRY
You're disturbing the peace.

ALEX (SINGING FASTER)
...that you and I are through...

DONIGAN (yelling OS)
Jesus Christ.

CUT THE PARROT BY DONIGAN CUMMING

GERRY

Stop your singing.

DONIGAN (yelling OS)

Stop him. Stop him, Gerry.

GERRY

Stop your singing.

DONIGAN (yelling OS)

Gerry, you got to do...stop him. Stop him.

Alex stops singing. Alex, Gerry, and Donigan (OS) LAUGH. The camera pans to Gerry.

ALEX (OS)

Oh, God...That was good there.

INT CLOSE SHOT DONIGAN'S STUDIO GERRY

The camera is ZOOMED in on Gerry's face. Gerry is lying on a table, his head tilted back. He has no shirt on.

GERRY

So, the morning she died they phoned Mrs. Sparling, eh?

The sound of a TELEPHONE RINGING can be heard. The camera pans so that the top of Gerry's head is on the left side of the frame. Gerry's face is close-up.

GERRY

Says, "Okay, I'll be up." So, before she died I told Mrs. Sparling, I says, "if anything should happen," I says, "just leave her there..." cause she had insurance but she dropped it. So, I says, "Now, if anything happens, you just leave her there and the City will take over. Okay, okay, okay. So, she goes out, she signs her out of the hospital with Dr. Burns. She picks out the casket and that. So, about a month after that, she got a bill for 3000 something. So, she phones me. She said, "Gerald, you owe me 3000 and something," it's almost 4000 dollars. So I said, "for what?" She says, "I buried your mother, they sent me the bill. I got it yesterday." I says, "I don't owe you nothing. I didn't ask you to bury her." So, she said, "well, you have to...somebody has to pay cause I got the bill." I said, "well, you signed as relative so they can hold you responsible. You should have left her there." She had to pay it. So, about a week or two after that, she phoned me, she said, "How much can you pay me a month

The camera pans so that Gerry's head is upside down.

CUT THE PARROT BY DONIGAN CUMMING

GERRY
on your mother's funeral?" I said, "nothing."

The shot changes. FULL SHOT. Gerry is naked except for his socks, lying on a wooden table, on a wooden floor, in front of a grid-lined wall. The camera tapes him from his feet. The sound of CLANGING can be heard.

GERRY
And I hanged up. I haven't seen her since.

FADE OUT

INT CLOSE SHOT DONIGAN'S OFFICE DONIGAN'S EYE

DONIGAN
I can't remember much colour. The cafeteria's white. The chairs are plastic.

DONIGAN
We're in New Jersey. Grey drizzling rain. It's July.

The camera ZOOMS OUT to Donigan's eyes and nose.

DONIGAN
We're visiting Julien at his institution. My father's talking to a handsome blond man in his early 20s. All of us are sitting at one end of a long table. There's Embree and Alfred, and Georgia, my mother, my father, Julien, and me.

The camera TILTS to Donigan's mouth.

DONIGAN
The man is standing. I am nine. My brother is 16. My parent's first child. He doesn't talk much when we visit. We meet him at his cottage. We hear how well he's doing. We stand on the front lawn surrounded by people who live in Julien's house. Some round with Downs, others just gaping at us. They are very interested in us.

A GARBAGE TRUCK COMPACTING can be heard.

DONIGAN
Then we go to the cafeteria to eat ice cream. Julien remains withdrawn and speechless. Never saying what he wants. Back then you suggested things and waited for a gesture. A

***CUT THE PARROT* BY DONIGAN CUMMING**

nod or a grunt. He never gave you much to go on. He made it up as you went along. My father is having a good time talking to the young man. We sense his ease and we watch him. We watch them both and then we listen. It's so interesting. And Julien just eats. My father and the man talk about the man's job at Vineland and his home nearby. He tells my father about the drive to work, his car, his kids, his wife, his kids again. His ambitions, his car again, his devotion to the people at Vineland. He fooled my father. He was retarded. We found out later. Another man told us he did it to everyone. My mother and father talked about it for a long time, as we drove on. It amazed them.

FADE OUT