

The French Joint

by

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FADE IN:

EXT. APARTMENT BUILDING - SUN DOWN

The day is coming to an end and the lights of the city take over. The apartment's sign "*Haven Heights Apartments*" flickers, struggling to turn on. Despite a good attempt... Bang! The electricity blows out.

JACK (V.O.)
Figured, after all this time, I
would have gotten used to the
nocturnal side of life.

INT. BEDROOM - NIGHT

JACK wakes up out of his sleep very disgruntled. The city lights shining from the window are just as intense as sunlight to him. The police sirens don't help either. He sits up and shakes off his grogginess.

JACK
Christ.

He notices the time on the clock next to the bed. 7:34 PM.

JACK (V.O.)
It turns out, nocturnal is just as
annoying as being diurnal... or
whatever the opposite of nocturnal
is. I'm no scientist.

INT. LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

JACK (V.O.)
This city practically runs at
night... Not in the booming
industrial way you're thinking. Not
much "work" gets done here.

Jack walks in buttoning his shirt. He reaches for the fridge to grab some left over Chinese food, but discovers that mustard is the only thing in there.

JACK (V.O.)
Just a lot of drinking, dirty
deals, dead bodies---

The sound of someone sniffing get's his attention. He turns around slowly, not sure who or what is sitting on his sofa.

DEBRA (O.S.)
What's that stinkin' smell?

JACK (V.O.)
And then there's Debra.

DEBRA is sitting down watching television. She's young, barely in her 20's and is dressed provocatively, to say the least.

DEBRA
Ever hear of a shower, Jack?

JACK
Just took one.

DEBRA
Then what is that fuckin' smell?

Jack sighs and continues to get dressed.

JACK
For someone who just broke into a place she wasn't invited into, you sure have a lot of nerve complaining, Debra.

DEBRA
I didn't break in. I have a key. See?

She reveals a key.

JACK
Copied from breaking in here the last time. By the way, what are you doing here and why did you eat my Lo Mein?

DEBRA
I got hungry. Figured you'd be sleeping for another couple of days.

JACK (V.O.)
It's not what you think. Debra here is just proof that there's some amount of charity left in this city... Unfortunately, it's me.

DEBRA
You had cable the last time. What happened?

JACK
Satellite, not cable. Some bastard
decided my life in here was too
luxurious and stole it from the
roof.

DEBRA
Geez. Nothing is sacred in this
town.

JACK
You think?

JACK (V.O.)
Any other man would have shot her
dead for eating his meal. Luckily
for her, I had other options.

She rubs her bruised shoulder as you flips through the
television channels.

JACK (V.O.)
She's a long story... Just might be
homeless for all I know, but my
humble abode is one of her few pit-
stops this side of town.

DEBRA
You going out?

Jack puts on his hat and coat.

JACK
It's not like I have much of a
choice. Why? You wanna join me?

DEBRA
Nah. I'm good.

JACK (V.O.)
I knew she was hiding from someone.
Someone with a very stiff backhand.
I didn't have the heart to tell her
to scram.

Jack walks toward the door.

JACK
You know the rules. Stay out---

DEBRA
Stay out of your liquor cabinet.

JACK

Good.

JACK (V.O.)

The least I can do is set some boundaries, right?

INT. APARTMENT HALL - NIGHT

Jack walks out of his room, locks the door and notices a HOMELESS MAN squatting over a plant. They both stare at each other awkwardly for a few moments.

JACK (V.O.)

I'm no Sherlock, but the mystery of the "Phantom Stench"... Case closed.

HOMELESS MAN

I'm... ummmm...

JACK

Fertilizing?

HOMELESS MAN

Fertilizing.

Jack walks down the stairs as if nothing happened.

EXT. STREET - NIGHT

JACK (V.O.)

Luckily, my appetite was still intact.

He heads down the street and passes a group of would-be troublemakers. One of them stands up, hoping to scare Jack into coughing up some money, but his friend pulls him back.

HOODLUM

Don't waste your time. This piece of shit only carries pennies.

JACK

Evening, gentlemen.

HOODLUM

Just keep walking, you cheap bastard!

A few blocks away. Jack notices a Chinese Restaurant and a French Restaurant. He seems undecided for a moment, but he crosses the street.

JACK (V.O.)

For some reason, I felt the urge to change habit. How much different could a French joint be?

He reads the menu that's sealed in a case.

JACK (V.O.)

Out of this world, apparently. Then again, I couldn't help but notice the lack of bullet holes on the entrance doors. I figured, for once, it would be nice to eat without getting shot at.

Jack walks in.

JACK (V.O.)

Fuck it.

INT. FRENCH JOINT - NIGHT

Jack walks inside and is immediately greeted by the HOST.

HOST

Welcome, sir.

JACK

Yeah... Hi. Table for one, please.

HOST

(no accent)

One? Really?

JACK (V.O.)

What the hell was I thinking, walking into the French Joint?

JACK

Yeah. One.

HOST

Right this way.

Jack sits down at his table. A waiter walks over.

WAITER

Ah, dinner for one tonight?

JACK
It's that obvious, huh?

FADE TO:

INT. FRENCH JOINT - NIGHT - MINUTES LATER

Jack is eating his food and doesn't look like he's enjoying it.

JACK
As I sat in the booth, eating one of the tiniest portions in existence, I couldn't help but notice the shift in the atmosphere.

Jack stops eating and looks around cautiously.

JACK
Maybe I was just being paranoid... or my bastard senses were tingling.

The place seems a bit darker. The bells to the entrance ring and Jack looks at the man that just walked in.

JACK (V.O.)
There... The goon I could detect miles away, like a shark can do with a drop of blood.

BIG TONY, a large man with a trench coat, steps in. The host offers to take his coat, but Tony beams him a look. Wisely, the host decides not to bother him.

JACK (V.O.)
He didn't blend in with the rest of the sharply dressed populace, not even in the slightest. He definitely didn't show up for the gourmet cuisine.

Jack notices the direction Tony is staring in.

JACK (V.O.)
He was there for something far more appetizing.

Across the restaurant, a young woman made eye contact with Big Tony, instantly freezing her as if someone splashed ice water on her back. It's RACHEL. Jack is awestruck.

JACK (V.O.)
 Brunette, dark brown eyes, and ruby
 red carefully spread across her
 lips. I... I almost lost focus.

Quickly grabbing her purse, she looked for the exits with her peripherals while keeping her attention on Big Tony. A waitress walked over to her table, mistaking the purse in her lap as a request for the check.

WAITRESS
 Are you all finished, miss? Would
 you like any dessert?

Rachel pulled out a wad of cash and placed it on the table, none the wiser about the surprised look on the waitress's face.

Tony inches his way toward her, ignoring the host stationed at the entrance.

JACK (V.O.)
 It was time for yours truly to do
 something he would regret in the
 morning.

As Tony slowly walked toward her, Jack quickly cut in front of him and slithered his way into the chair, opposite Rachel. She's surprised, but remains silent. The Waitress walks over to another table.

JACK (V.O.)
 The scent of cheap cigarettes
 lingered in my nostrils, but I did
 everything I could to ignore it.
 Surprised looks abound, but it was
 a play that halted his pursuit.

Jack clears his throat.

JACK
 Is it me or does the food here
 really suck.

RACHEL
 Who are you?

JACK
 I'm a just a guy. Noticed you from
 across this joint. Noticed your
 friend, as well.

Rachel finally takes her eyes off of her stalker and looks at Jack.

JACK (V.O.)
Now that I had a closer look at them, her eyes were a bit too much for a bloke like me.

The waitress walks over to the table again.

WAITRESS
Your bill, Mademoiselle.

Rachel gives her a hundred dollar bill.

RACHEL
Keep the change.

JACK
So? Boyfriend of yours?

A look of disgust appeared on her face.

RACHEL
Oh, God! Never.

JACK (V.O.)
It would have been foolish to step into a quarrel of lovers.

Tony begins to back up, slowly toward the exit.

JACK (V.O.)
More importantly, if that were the case, it would have kept me up at night, wondering how an ugly son of a bitch like that managed to court such a beauty in the first place.

RACHEL
He's been following me for weeks.

JACK
Is that so? I can't really blame him.

RACHEL
What do you mean you "can't blame him?"

JACK (V.O.)

Like her curvy figure and movie star looks were things that didn't draw the attention of assholes and gentlemen alike.

JACK

You're attractive. I'd chase you across town, too... but I'm less creepy about it.

JACK (V.O.)

The food in the restaurant was lousy, but the dinnerware was top-notch. Shiny and extremely reflective, I used the silver top of a dish as a mirror, tilting it up so I could keep an eye out for Mr. Trench-coat.

Jack looks into a make-shift mirror, seeing Rachel's ragged stalker back off closer to the entrance door.

RACHEL

So that's why you decided to come over here? Are you some kind of skirt chaser?

JACK

Nothing like that. I always manage to find myself knee-deep in trouble. Just figured, I might as well pick my poison for a change.

She takes a sip of her Romanée Conti.

RACHEL

The good Samaritan, huh? Sounds too good to be true.

JACK

Unfortunately, I'm the last of a dying breed.

She chuckles, almost coughing out her red wine.

RACHEL

You should put that on a Valentine. It's cute.

JACK (V.O.)

Not that I was trying to crack, but I hardly had company during my evenings...afternoons... Dare I say mornings? Aside the occasional raiding from Debra, I haven't really spoken to a soul in months.

Jack turns around and finds that Tony exited the restaurant.

JACK

Now that gruesome has left the building---

RACHEL

The name's Rachel, by the way.

JACK

Ah, Rachel, then. Now that gruesome left the building, mind telling me why he's being such a bastard?

Her body language changed tremendously. Shoulders were more relaxed and her back was up against the chair unlike her frigid self minutes prior.

RACHEL

I'm somewhat of a big deal back home.

She sighs a bit, almost embarrassed to say.

RACHEL

My father sent him to bring me home. I've been a bad, bad girl.

JACK

You're a grown-ass woman.

RACHEL

It doesn't work that way. Once Daddy's little girl, always Daddy's little girl.

JACK

So you're trying to escape your father?

RACHEL

I'm trying to escape the business.

JACK

Oh... I see.

She leans in toward Jack.

JACK (V.O.)

Staring directly into my eyes, I pretended she's a wall because, despite her eyes being so dark, it was the equivalent of staring into the sun.

RACHEL

(whispers)

Yeah, I want out of it. You don't know how much shit I have to put up with... So much death I have to see everyday and I have to go around and pretend nothing happened. Do you know what that's like?

JACK (V.O.)

Actually, I did, but for her sake and the fact that she was opening up to me...

He shakes his head.

JACK

I'm sure you've seen a lifetime's worth of bad things.

RACHEL

There's this room back home. I remember playing in it back when I was a snot-nosed brat.

Jack's waiter discovers that he's missing.

RACHEL

Back then, I didn't know what Dad was up to. Just a lot of his friends show up one day and some of them you just don't see ever again.

JACK (V.O.)

From the corner of my eye, I spotted my waiter searching for me. The crazy idea of avoiding him altogether popped in my head.

He looks around for Jack.

JACK (V.O.)

That meal wasn't worth fifty-five ninety five.

(MORE)

JACK (V.O.) (CONT'D)

I tried to liven up from my usual
shit-kicker self while listening to
Rachel talk about her life as a
mobster's daughter. Multi-tasking.

RACHEL

Growing up like that, I learned to
not get attached to any of them
because most of them would take a
trip back to the motherland.

The waiter finds him.

JACK (V.O.)

Shit. Must have picked up my scent
or my change in posture wasn't good
enough to fool his hawk-eye vision.

RACHEL

As it turned out, all of them were
with me my entire life. Stuck
inside the walls.

She laughs nervously. Very embarrassed.

RACHEL

My father is a Necromaniac. He's
obsessed with dead things...dead
people.

JACK

I can't imagine how that must have
been for you, Rachel.

RACHEL

It was an eye opening experience.
After discovering the bodies, I had
to leave. I just had to, you know?

The waiter walks over to their table, smiling.

JACK (V.O.)

The waiter walked over to me with a
huge smile on his face. It was a
smile that said, "Yes, you are
going to pay for this shitty meal,
you cheap bastard." I hated that
smile and pretended not to see him.

WAITER

There you are, sir!

JACK
(muttering)
Yeah. A friend of mine from work.

The waiter places the bill on the table and scurries off.
Jack turned the paper over to see the numbers he was dreading
the entire night.

JACK (V.O.)
Fifty-five ninety-fucking-five.

JACK
Shit.
(to Rachel)
I'm sorry. You were saying?

RACHEL
My mother's diary. She hid it a few
days before she died. She had a
heart attack at 47....or at least
that's what my father told me.

JACK
What's in the purse?

RACHEL
Excuse me?

JACK
You were guarding it like you
recovered a fumble.

Rachel sighs.

RACHEL
I'm actually just a bonus, really.
The diary has a lot of family
secrets that could destroy him.
It's my little leverage.

Reaching for his wallet.

JACK
And what are you planning to do
with that leverage?

RACHEL
To be perfectly honest, I don't
know. Part of me wants to give it
to the feds. I'm sure it will be a
good read for them.

A beat.

RACHEL

Another part of me just wants to start over fresh. I want a normal life.

JACK

Sorry to break it to you, but as long as you possess that diary, that will never happen.

RACHEL

This is the only thing I have that belonged to her. The rest of my mother's belongings were tossed out because of his new bitch of a wife.

JACK

I know it has---

RACHEL

It's something I can't just let go of.

Jack surrenders a smile.

JACK

I understand.

He pulls out his cash, but Rachel immediately plucks it back to him and replaces it with her own.

RACHEL

No, allow me.

JACK

Oh, I can't let you do that, Rachel. I mean... Well, if you insist.

RACHEL

Think of it as a thank you for listening to my boring story...and for getting rid of Tony.

JACK

Tony? So, that's his name.

RACHEL

They call him 'Big Tony' where I'm from. He's pretty nasty and he's my Dad's personal blood hound. He didn't really go away, you know? He's waiting outside for me.

Jack looks around the restaurant.

JACK

It wouldn't be good to leave out
the front.

He points to the back, where the kitchen is.

JACK

There's an exit through the
kitchen. Ignore the cooks and go
through.

RACHEL

(grinning)

Sounds like someone has experience
with situations like this.

As she grabbed her purse and scooted out of the chair, she
noticed something a bit strange.

RACHEL

You know, I never got your name.

JACK

Jack... Jack Coleman.

They shake hands.

RACHEL

Thank you, Jack.

JACK

My pleasure.

She walks to the kitchen area. Jack watches fixedly.

JACK (V.O.)

Ever hear the phrase "I hate to see
her go but I love to watch her
leave?"

Rachel's walk becomes somewhat like a model's runway for
Jack.

JACK (V.O.)

As she walked towards the kitchen,
it was hard to ignore her figure.
Rachel sported long legs, even
without the heels. Her cocktail
dress exposed her bare back. You
can call me weird, but I'm the rare
type that's into a woman's back.

(MORE)

JACK (V.O.) (CONT'D)
There's just something about a perfectly aligned spine that intrigues me and certainly passes specifications.

Jack dabs a napkin on his forehead. He sweating a bit.

INT. FRENCH JOINT - KITCHEN - NIGHT- CONTINUOUS

Rachel walks past the cooks, not saying a word. They notice her, but they don't say anything. Just staring, astonished by a rare treat for their eyes.

JACK (V.O.)
She had this walk about her, which definitely confirmed her royalty, but it wasn't the Disney princess variety. She was a filthy princess, or that's what I wanted her to be for ten minutes.

INT. FRENCH JOINT - NIGHT

Jack notices a piece of paper in his hand.

JACK (V.O.)
The torn sheet of paper in my hand smacked me back to reality. It was the number to her cell phone. On the inside, I was doing a Gene Kelly bit... Umbrella and all.

EXT. OUTSIDE THE FRENCH JOINT - NIGHT

Jack walks and stops to take a look around.

JACK (V.O.)
Outside the restaurant, the atmosphere was in rare form, but some things were spot on. The ground was wet and shiny, glowing with the lights that illuminated the city.

He continues to walk the path home.

JACK (V.O.)
It was pretty to stare at when sober, but when you're piss drunk, the colors induced vomit.
(MORE)

JACK (V.O.) (CONT'D)
Sadly, I spent many a night
decorating the sidewalk.

Crosses the street.

JACK (V.O.)
The rare features were the absence
of people. In addition, moving
vehicles were also scarce. The
sidewalks were bare and there was
virtually no sound that indicated
human life.

A cat is shown scratching at a beer can.

JACK (V.O.)
It's an improvement.

Jack's stomach starts to make some weird noises.

JACK
Ugh... Should have ordered the
lobster instead.

JACK (V.O.)
Bad food aside, the night was going
surprisingly well. I just hoped
there wasn't a steaming pile of
homeless turd on the front stairs.

He reaches the block where the hoodlums were. The streets are
still empty.

JACK (V.O.)
If you haven't guessed by now, I'm
as cheap as they come. The bastards
like to leave me gifts for ignoring
them in the morning.

Footsteps heard from a block away.

JACK (V.O.)
Two blocks before I reached home
sweet home, I heard footsteps
behind me. Heavy footsteps.

The steps get loader and faster.

JACK (V.O.)
Three hundred pounds worth of foot
steps.

Jack continues to walk, but he quickens his pace.

JACK (V.O.)

I tried not to turn around because I was starting to imagine a gorilla or something out of a wild jungle behind me, but that was a slim possibility. Even with the increase of city folk harboring wild animals in their apartments, there was no way they could contain a gorilla...

The footsteps are even louder.

JACK (V.O.)

Which could explain why it would be on the loose.

The sound of heavy breathing joins the footsteps.

JACK

Jesus Christ.

His walk turns into a speed walk, but it looks weird.

JACK (V.O.)

I fought the urge to turn around and tried to walk normally, but I failed, epically.

He squeezes his butt cheeks together as he power walks.

JACK (V.O.)

I know for a fact that I walk a certain way when nervous. People used to say I walk like I have something stuck up my ass. It's not a pretty sight.

The breathing and running is even louder. Jack starts to turn around.

JACK (V.O.)

As my ass cheeks moved as one down the street, the footsteps got louder and more frequent. The gorilla's pace had quickened and I found myself turning around.

He turns and sees two male joggers run past him.

JACK (V.O.)

Like Fujin and Raijin, two late night joggers ran past me in unison.

NIGHT JOGGER

Don't shit on the sidewalk,
asshole!

Jack breathes a sigh of relief and continues home.

JACK (V.O.)

Who in their right mind jogs at
night? Good thing he had his life-
partner to protect him, huh?
Despite the embarrassing walk of
shame, I was relieved and continued
to my apartment.

He walks near and alley and a pair of hands grabs him by the
collar.

JACK (V.O.)

Unfortunately, I was out of the
frying pan and into the fire.

EXT. DARK ALLEY - NIGHT - CONTINUOUS

Jack's back slams up against the wall.

JACK (V.O.)

To no surprise, my ass cheeks were
tight again.

Jack looks up at a foreboding figure stepping out of the
shadows. It's Big Tony.

JACK (V.O.)

As I looked up to see my attacker,
I noticed the familiar smell of
cheap cigarettes.

Cigarette smoke is blown in his face, but it doesn't phase
Jack.

JACK

Big Tony.

BIG TONY

You really think you're cute don't
you?

JACK

That's what your mother keeps
telling me.

JACK (V.O.)

I'll have you know, insults directed at someone's mother was an unfortunate gift of mine. It's totally not fair to the person's mother and I usually feel a little bad about it later on.

Tony punches him in the stomach. Jack falls on the ground like a sack of potatoes.

JACK (V.O.)

I couldn't help but fall to the germ infested ground. He's a big guy and his fists were practically made for punching things.

Tony cracks his knuckles and stands Jack up to his feet.

JACK (V.O.)

By history's standards, he would have made a fine Spartan soldier, but something told me that he would have been tossed down the mountain as an infant due to his ugliness.

Another punch to the gut.

JACK (V.O.)

The elder Spartans would have been like, "Fuck efficiency, just this once."

Jack calls for a time-out.

JACK

Tony... Tony...

BIG TONY

What?

JACK

Tony... Can't we just talk this over like gentlemen?

BIG TONY

You think you're funny?

Punches him in the stomach again. Some blood flies out of Jack's mouth.

JACK (V.O.)

You have to understand that when the wind gets knocked out of you, it's extremely hard to move. I wanted to stop his big fist from rearranging my innards, but, at that point, it would have been like trying to stop George W. Bush from squinting.

More punches to the body.

JACK (V.O.)

His fifth punch activated my bowels and I felt like I actually had to take a shit. Suddenly, a boost of adrenaline flowed through my body and my arms were able to move.

Jack's knees begins to wobble as he stands up. He's shaking and struggling, but he managed to get on his feet.

JACK (V.O.)

Sure, it was all wriggly like a person with epilepsy having a seizure while being electrocuted, but it was moving none the less.

JACK

I won't be shitting my pants tonight!

BIG TONY

Huh?

JACK (V.O.)

Yeah, I really yell that. Not just to Tony, but also to those happy-go-lucky joggers miles away. They needed to know, dammit.

With Tony's next punch, Jack twisted his torso so that Tony's fist would hit the brick wall behind him. The pain wasn't excruciating, but it was enough for him to let go.

JACK (V.O.)

In case you haven't figured it out, I'm not a great fighter. During the course of my travels I picked up a few moves here and there.

(MORE)

JACK (V.O.) (CONT'D)
These moves are nothing fancy, but
they get the job done.

CUT TO:

INT. A WAREHOUSE - NIGHT

Jack and a random thug are fighting in a flashback.

JACK (V.O.)
Move number one: The Head-Clap.

Jack applies the move to the thug.

JACK (V.O.)
You basically just clap as hard as
you can, catching the opponent's
head in the middle.

The thug staggers.

JACK (V.O.)
Move number two: The Throat Thrust.

He applies the throat thrust.

JACK (V.O.)
I like to think of it as an instant
fight stopper because no one
expects to get hit in the throat,
right?

The thug staggers again, coughing, gaging, fighting for air.

JACK (V.O.)
Move number three: A swift kick in
the nuts. Plain and simple.

Jack kicks the thug in the nuts.

JACK (V.O.)
I know it's not really a great move
and it's rather cowardly to use on
another man, but I'm too lazy for
fisticuffs. The sooner I can end
it, the sooner I can go back to
being miserable. The sooner I can
use my toilet!

The thug falls to the ground, cringing in pain. Jack pulls
out a cigarette and smokes it.

EXT. DARK ALLEY - NIGHT

Tony rushes Jack into a corner, swinging his fist like a mad bull. Jack connects with a Head-clap.

JACK (V.O.)
The head-clap connected, but I forgot to mention that it only worked on people who have brains.

Tony shakes it off and continues toward Jack.

JACK (V.O.)
I believe my attack activated his saliva glands or something. Drool accompanied his fist as he tried to take my head off.

After dodging a haymaker, Jack uses his throat thrust.

BIG TONY
Ack!

JACK (V.O.)
The throat thrust caused him to make a weird sound, which was music to my ears, but the fight wasn't over.

Tony staggered for a moment, but the attack only made him angrier.

JACK (V.O.)
I'm no martial artist, but Tony defied my Kung-Fu.

BIG TONY
I'm gonna kill you! You're dead!

Tony charges at Jack again. Jack positions himself as if he was about to kick a field goal.

JACK (V.O.)
Move number three stepped to bat. I usually felt bad for resorting to it... and God knows it's not always used as my third move. Depending on my mood, the numbers get mixed up and rearranged.

CUT TO:

INT. APARTMENT HALL - DAY

Jack's neighbor, a skinny college student, digs in his mailbox outside his room.

JACK (V.O.)
The other day, I had to kick my neighbor in the nethers for stealing my magazine subscriptions out of the mail box.

Jack turns him around and kicks him in the nuts. The art student slides to the ground.

ART STUDENT
Ooooo... awwwwwww!

JACK (V.O.)
He's an artsy guy, too. Liked to cut them up for his "projects". A crime worthy of move number three, I say.

EXT. DARK ALLEY - NIGHT

Tony is still running towards Jack like a runaway freight train. Images of Jack's life start appearing.

JACK (V.O.)
My life flashed before my eyes, but it was cut short due to the confidence that "Move number three" would work. I mean, it's patented.

The images disappear like popped bubbles.

JACK (V.O.)
Who cares if he's running toward me at uncanny speed for a man his size, I thought. You don't need to be a martial arts master to put your foot to someone's balls.

CUT TO:

INT. SISTER'S HOUSE - LIVING ROOM- DAY

Jack is playing with his niece. He picks her up while he's seated and she kicks frantically, stomping on his crotch.

He puts her down and gently lays down sideways, cringing in agony.

JACK (V.O.)
I have a niece who expertly hits
"Uncle Jack" in the balls every
time he visits... and she just
turned 5 last Wednesday.

On another visit, she's playing with her dolls and swings on across the room. She let's go and one of them darts towards Jack's balls. He doubles over in pain.

JACK (V.O.)
If she can master the jewel-smasher
at such a tender age, then my foot
should be at the level of Chuck
Norris.

EXT. DARK ALLEY - NIGHT

Jack's foot reels back.

BIG TONY (O.S.)
You motherfucker!

JACK (V.O.)
Yes, it looked cartoony, but you
try kicking a monster in the nuts
as he bum-rushes you in a dark
alley.

Tony is getting closer.

JACK (V.O.)
Let's see how you look then.

Even closer.

JACK (V.O.)
I, "The Cheap Bastard", would pay
good money to see that.

Tony is practically on him.

JACK (V.O.)
Back to move three, it was prepped,
but I wound it back a little too
far.

Jack's foot slides back on a banana peel. His legs went in opposite directions from each other, one going forward and the other going back toward the wall.

JACK
Awww! Son of a---

Tony misses the tackle. He hits the wall with a sickening thud. WHAM!

JACK (V.O.)
Apparently, splits have age restrictions. A 40 year old man with questionable athletic experience, holding back his bowels, should never do a split.

Jack struggles to get up.

JACK (V.O.)
On the bright side, the unexpected stretch caused Tony to miss me completely.

He stand on his feet and limps over to an unconscious Tony.

JACK (V.O.)
Maybe it was the civil servant in me, but I had to check his vitals.

Jack checks his pulse.

JACK (V.O.)
Big Tony was alive, which wasn't a good thing for me. Another man would have finished him off, but I happened to be of a different caliber.

Jack rolls Tony's massive body over. He quickly checks for any other random banana peels behind him. Then, again, he winds his leg back and kicks Tony square in the nuts.

BIG TONY
Uhhhh...

JACK (V.O.)
What? He almost made me shit my pants. Some measure of sweet satisfaction was in order.

Jack leans up against the wall, really feeling the aftermath of his scuffle. He pulls out a cigarette and tries to light it, but the lighter won't work. Frustrated, he plucks the cigarette away.

Jack stares at Tony for a while.

JACK (V.O.)
He wasn't getting up for a while,
which was good enough for me. It
meant that he was really out of it
and I could freely search him
for... uhhh... "information."

Jack searches his pockets.

JACK (V.O.)
Nothing of importance. Except...

Jack pulls cash from Tony's wallet. An unopened condom falls out.

JACK (V.O.)
It's nice that Tony was prepared to
take the necessary precautions,
but, he was so ugly, I doubt he
could even purchase sex.

He takes a few steps back, still eyeing Tony.

JACK (V.O.)
I felt the need to say something
witty like they do in the movies,
but nothing great came to mind...
Except...

JACK
(holding the wad of cash
in the air)
I... I need this! I need this.

Jack limps out of the alley.

JACK (V.O.)
My injuries just cut the muse off
completely.

EXT. THE STREETS - NIGHT - CONTINUOUS

Jack limps down the street.

JACK (V.O.)
I'm no superhero, but better
catchphrases was something I
really pondered on the toilet.

FADE OUT.