

RUBBER HOSE GENTLEMEN

"Pilot"

Written by

James Sismanes

TEASER

EXT. ALLEYWAY OFF BROADWAY - NIGHT

EXTREME CLOSE-UP.

A man stares directly into the lens. We can't see his face because he's wearing a SQUIRREL-SHAPED MASCOT HEADPIECE. A single drop of blood trickles down the cotton. Slowly. SILENCE -- except for the sound of dogs barking and a dark jazz underscore.

The man reaches for a crinkled copy of the NEW YORK DAILY NEWS. The paper is wedged in the gutter beneath shards of broken glass. The newspaper's been ripped in the corner, exposing a comic strip on the inside page. The man is holding a SMITH & WESSON .38 REVOLVER in his right hand. It's still smoking. Doesn't take a genius to figure out that the blood and the gun are probably related. He uses the newspaper to clean the blood spatter from the gun's barrel and cylinder.

In the distance we hear sirens, but the man isn't deterred. He's cautious but resolute. Besides, the police are probably more concerned with busting a speakeasy. It is the ROARING TWENTIES, after all.

He breathes heavier now. The respirations are loud and reverberated. They drown out the sirens. He's finding it difficult to regulate oxygen under the weight of the HEADPIECE. That, or, he's coming to terms with the fact that he's just MURDERED someone.

The man lifts the HEADPIECE up and over his head. We still can't see his face. He shrouds the REVOLVER in sheets of newspaper and deposits the weapon inside the HEADPIECE.

We PAN TO the HEADPIECE, hanging upside-down by the tips of the man's fingers. As we PAN DOWN, we see three things: the HEADPIECE, the man's CAP TOE OXFORD SHOES and a woman covered in BLOOD, lying lifeless on the concrete.

FADE TO BLACK:

END TEASER

TITLE CREDITS.

FADE IN:

EXT. PRAXIS-OLDMAN STUDIOS - MORNING

ESTABLISHING SHOT. We're on the corner of Seventh Avenue and Broadway. Construction workers parade down Times Square.

Theatre lights glimmer from the night prior. Prohibition agents dump DRUMS of liquor into the sewers.

SUPER: NEW YORK, 1929

Three TROLLEYS roll down the Manhattan streetcar line on Broadway -- the nearest of the three passes by a crowded and lively ten-story building.

INSERT: On the side of the building, a vertical street-sign in a gothic Art Deco type-font reads: "SOLLY SQUIRREL - THE PRAXIS-OLDMAN BROTHERS."

INT. PRAXIS-OLDMAN STUDIOS MAIN FLOOR - CONTINUOUS

It's a typical morning at PRAXIS-OLDMAN STUDIOS. Animators -- all men -- are sketching characters, drawing keyframes and brainstorming. They're using KEM WEBER ANIMATION DESKS and LIGHTING TABLES. State-of-the-art technology for the era.

The only women in sight are answering phone calls and pouring coffee. It's clear that this is a real "boys club," but an upper-echelon operation at that.

WILLIE OLDMAN, 23, kind-of goofy, patrols the animation floor, evaluating the work of his staff. He notices Lead Animator EDDIE PRICE, who is busy pulling faces in front of a wooden mirror. He's drawing each pose in cartoon on sheets of celluloid.

WILLIE  
Lookin' good, Eddie!

EDDIE  
Thanks, boss.

CUT TO:

A small group of animators -- KENNY GOFF, 26, TEDDY COLLINS, 28 and LELAND "LOLLY" BENTZ, 24 -- are on a coffee and tobacco break. They've dropped their pencils and are chewing the fat over the NEW YORK YANKEES.

KENNY  
Those fellas not only beat you but they tear your Goddamn heart out.

TEDDY  
Who?  
(sips coffee)

KENNY

Murderers' Row. The Yankees. C'mon, Teddy. Earle Combs, Mark Koenig, Babe Ruth, Lou Gehrig, Bob Meusel, and -- who's that other one? The "wop"?

LOLLY

(at Kenny)  
Lazzeri?

KENNY

(snaps fingers)  
Tony fucking Lazzeri.

Kenny swings an invisible baseball bat through the air.

KENNY (CONT'D)

I mean, are you kidding me? Who's gonna stop us at bat this season?

In the background, we hear the static of a battery-powered AM RADIO. Willie approaches.

WILLIE

Hey, fellas, could ya quit your lollygaggin' and turn that up?

Willie points at the RADIO. TEDDY turns the volume dial clockwise.

(V.O.)

And now, we bring you the latest news out of London, England. British investor Clarence Hatry and many of his associates were jailed this morning following allegations of fraud and forgery. The London Stock Exchange committee has immediately suspended all shares of the Hatry Group, greatly weakening the optimism of American investment abroad.

WILLIE turns down the volume dial. He laughs, half-heartedly.

WILLIE

Britain.  
(scoffs)  
Guess it's like America, only there's more tea and a lot less sugar.

Willie rubs his fingers together to perform the "money sign."