

RODEO

Written by  
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OVER BLACK

SUPER: "6:36 AM"

FADE IN:

EXT. CHICAGO SUBURBS - EARLY MORNING

Ground level, looking down the center of a quiet, tree-lined residential street. Oak trees arch over the street like the ceiling of a cathedral. Sunlight streams down through their leaves much as it would have in the Garden of Eden.

Directly in front of us a manhole cover tips up and then slowly slides left, the sound of the metal grating on the pavement. Somewhere in the distance a dog barks.

The fingers of two white-gloved hands slip up through the opening created and grip the edge of the manhole cover, then slowly push it further open. When the cover is halfway off, wild, rainbow-colored clown hair emerges, followed by CLOWN #1 wearing a red and white polka-dotted suit.

Clown #1 pushes the manhole cover the rest of the way off the hole, then climbs out, his huge, black clown shoes catching on the edge of the hole as he stands up. He wipes sweat from his brow, smudging his makeup, then reaches back down for a large canvas sack being handed to him.

He pulls the sack up, swings it over his shoulder, and starts down the middle of the street, stooped from the weight of it, the sack lumpy with bill-shaped bundles.

Twenty yards down the street Clown #1 passes a large brick house with a bay window in which a young BOY in Batman pajamas clutches a sippy cup and stares at him wide-eyed.

Clown #1 waves casually at the Boy then holds one white gloved finger to his lips. The Boy slowly raises his hand, waves carefully, and takes a sip from his cup.

Back at the manhole, CLOWN #2 emerges sporting wild red hair and a green and yellow striped suit. He reaches back for the sack being handed up to him, swings it over his shoulder, and starts down the street, his long, brown clown shoes slapping flatly on the pavement in the morning quiet.

When Clown #2 reaches the bay-window house, he sees the boy, raises his white-gloved hand and makes a gun with his fingers. He pulls the trigger, mouths a silent POW, and blows smoke from the barrel before plodding on. The Boy giggles.

Ahead, Clown #1 reaches a blue mini-van parked against the curb beneath a tree. He opens the tailgate, replete with a stick figure family on the window, and swings his bag in.

He leaves the tailgate open, walks around to the front of the van, and gets into the driver's seat.

Back at the manhole, a sack is thrown up out of the hole, and then another, followed by burly CLOWN #3 sporting lime green hair and a purple suit with yellow stars.

He grabs one sack, swings it over his shoulder, and drags the other hurriedly down the street, not even noticing the Boy as he passes. The Boy waves to him anyway.

At the van Clown #3 throws his two sacks in, slams the tailgate shut, and climbs into the back seat by Clown #2.

CLOWN #1  
(looking back)  
Where's Jason?

CLOWN #3  
(gruffly)  
Jason ain't coming.

CLOWN #1  
What do you mean, he's not coming?

Clown #3 points forward, firmly, leaving no room for argument.

CLOWN #3  
Go.

The van pulls away from the curb and heads down the street, passing the empty manhole and its dislodged cover.

As it passes the hole, we . . .

CUT TO:

INT./EXT. SEWER TUNNEL BENEATH THE MANHOLE

Pitch black except for the light streaming in from the open manhole directly above. CLOWN #4 (Jason) lies face down, eyes open, as blood streams from his temple. We slowly zoom in on Jason's motionless figure as we . . .

FADE TO BLACK

SUPER: "8:20am"

EXT. SAME RESIDENTIAL STREET - DAY

A tow truck is hooked to a silver Mercedes sedan sitting crossways in the street, its rear tire stuck in the open manhole. It's clear the car has backed down its driveway and into the hole.

On the sidewalk watching are the young Boy, still in his pajamas, and his mother.

An uninterested COP and a city SANITATION WORKER talk by a police cruiser.

SANITATION WORKER

So why am I here?

COP

(gesturing to the Boy)

Kid says clowns came out of the hole.

SANITATION WORKER

So?

(beat)

What is he, like three?

COP

(shrugging)

Someone took the cover off.

Once the Mercedes is free, its owner gets in and angrily drives away, followed by the tow truck.

The Sanitation Worker immediately slides a ladder into the manhole and climbs down.

INT./EXT. STREET/SEWER TUNNEL - DAY

The Sanitation Worker sweeps the floor and walls in each direction with his flashlight.

Above him, the Cop peers down.

COP

Anything?

SANITATION WORKER

Nope.

(beat)

Not a thing.