

# Midnight Cowboy

Screenplay by  
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Based on the novel by  
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LAFS Scene Study  
Film Production 2 Course  
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# START

INT. EVERETT'S BAR - DAY

JOE sits at the bar, staring morosely at his image in the mirror, already quite drunk, oblivious to the assorted types hiding from daylight in the barn-like saloon, waiting for night to fall.

RATSO'S VOICE

Excuse me, I'm just admiring that colossal shirt...

RATSO studies Joe across the corner of the bar -- a sickly, child-size old man of twenty-one -- hopefully nursing an empty beer glass, contemplating the money on the bar in front of Joe.

RATSO

That is one hell of a shirt. I bet you paid a pretty price for it, am I right?

JOE

Oh, it ain't cheap. I mean, yeah, I'd say this was an all right shirt. Don't like to, uh, you know, have a lot of cheap stuff on my back.

Ratso spits as JACKIE leans on the bar next to Joe -- a feminine young person, heavily made-up, hair teased, wearing earrings and a lace-trimmed blouse over shocking pink levis.

JACKIE

Got a cigarette, cowboy?

RATSO

(a stage whisper)  
More goddam faggots in this town.

Reaching for a cigarette, Joe glances at Jackie, startled as Jackie twitches his pink levis angrily and turns away.

JOE

Shee-it...

(shakes his head)

Kee-rist, you really know the ropes. Wish to hell I bumped into you before. I'm Joe Buck from Texas and I'm gonna buy you a drink, what do you say to that?

RATSO

Enrico Rizzo from the Bronx. Don't mind if I do.

JOE  
(slaps bar)  
Same all around! For my friend,  
too!

Jackie actively ignores Joe and Rizzo, flirting with a tall farm boy with who watches the TV over the bar.

RATSO  
Screw them. Come on.

Ratso moves to a booth now. Joe takes the beers and a couple of glasses and follows.

LATER:

Joe is refilling Ratso's beer glass as he speaks.

JOE  
So this broad, she got a penthouse up there with color TV and more goddam diamonds than an archbishop and she busts out bawling when I ask for money!

RATSO  
For what?

JOE  
For money.

RATSO  
For money for what?

JOE  
I'm a hustler, hell, didn't you know that?

RATSO  
How would I know? You gotta tell a person these things  
(shakes his head)  
A hustler? Picking up trade on the street like that -- baby, believe me -- you need management.

JOE  
I think you just put your finger on it, I do.

RATSO  
My friend O'Daniel. That's who you need. Operates the biggest stable in town.

(MORE)

RATSO (CONT'D)

In the whole goddam metropolitan area. A stud like you - paying! -- not that I blame you -- a dame starts crying, I cut my heart for her...

JACKIE'S VOICE

I'd call that a very minor operation...

Ratso grabs the neck of a bottle, sliding back in the booth. Joe scowls as Jackie appears with the tall farm boy.

JACKIE

...in fact, you just sit comfy and I'll cut it out with my fingernail file. You won't even need Blue Cross, Ratso.

RATSO

The name is Rizzo.

JACKIE

That's what I said, Ratso.

JOE

(suddenly)

Hey now, you heard him.

RATSO

That's okay, Joe. I'm used to these types that like to pick on cripples. Sewers're full of 'em.

JACKIE

May I ask one thing, cowboy? If you sit there and he sits way over there, how's he gonna get his hand into your pocket? But I'm sure he has that all figured out...

(to Ratso)

Good night, sweets.

JOE

Listen, mister...

Jackie exits, blowing Ratso a kiss

RATSO

...it's ok, Joe.

JOE

Ain't no call to be...

RATSO

(changing the subject)

...See, with these chicks that want to buy it, most of 'em are older, dignified, right? Social register types. They can't be trotting down to Times Square to pick out the merchandise. They need a middleman, right? That's O'Daniel.

Ratso points toward a well-dressed young man sitting at the bar. Ratso waves jauntily at the young man, raising his thumb and forefinger in a circle, leaving the young man baffled.

RATSO (CONT'D)

Him I placed with O'Daniel just two weeks ago. And look. Not much of a stud either, what I hear...

JOE

Hey, listen, how about you take me to see this Mister O'Diddle bird right now?

RATSO

Well, Joe, you're a nice guy, and I'd be doing you both a favor, but why? What I wanna be dragging my bum leg all over town for? It's no picnic and what for, for me myself, what? Tomorrow when some piece'll be scratching your back in a Fifth Avenue townhouse, where'll your pal Rizzo be? Nedicks.

JOE

Hold it, just hold it. You think I'm that kinda sombitch? Just name your cut, whatever you want, you got it right now. Five? Ten, how's that?

Joe peels a ten from his wallet and offers it to Ratso.

RATSO

Joe, please. You know what I'd ask anyone else? Oh hell, tell you what I'll do, I'll take the ten...

(he does)

but when I hand you over to Mr. O'Daniel, I'll have to have another ten, Joe; just to like cover expenses...

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END