City of Joy

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Early Draft

FOR EDUCATIONAL
PURPOSES ONLY
CITY OF JOY

FADE IN:

TITLE SEQUENCE.

EXT. BIHAR - DAY (DAWN, SUMMER, MID-1980)

Heat that has mass. That rises off the parched earth in shimmering waves. After a moment, we see what appear to be figures coming out of the haze, one by one. A family with their few belongings: HASARI PAL, 33, his wife, ALOKA, 28, and their children, daughter, AMRITA, 13, sons MANOOJ and SHAMBU, 11 and 9; HASARI'S MOTHER and FATHER. They embark toward the night, the rising sun behind them.

EXT. ROADSIDE - BUS STOP - DAY (DAWN)

Hasari's Father passes a gourd of precious water. Hasari serves the children first. Shambu gulps entirely too much, the others forcing him to stop by a unified force of will. Embarrassed, he passes the cup to his brother, who sips, as does his sister. Aloka barely wets her lips, insisting on leaving the last drops for Hasari.

And now, a rooster tail of dust rises up behind the approaching bus and the old parents bid farewell to their son's family. There is an intense sadness at leaving the land and Hasari's Mother clings to him...

HASARI
I'll send money soon.

His Mother nods, as Hasari erupts in a small cough which, by habit, he suppresses. His Mother crushes Aloka to her.

HASARI'S MOTHER
Don't let the children out of your sight. Not for a moment.

Now the children. She wants to keep them here even as the old man touches her, reminding her she must let them go.

HASARI'S MOTHER
Help your parents. Don't fight with each other. And, Manooj, stay away from the cinema, do you hear?

Shambu, his eyes big as saucers, whispers to his grandma...

(CONTINUED)
CONTINUED:

SHAMBU
I don't want to go. There are bad men with long knives who steal children.

That does it: Hasari's Mother dissolves in tears, but the old man nevertheless unlooses her insistently from the children. Aloka and the children get on the bus as the old man embraces his son.

HASARI'S FATHER
A man's journey to the end of his obligations is a very long road. Yours begins here.

EXT. ROADSIDE/INT. BUS - DAY

There's not an empty inch inside the little vehicle or on top. The passengers are silent. A woman breast feeds a baby. Several passengers fan themselves. Many sleep. The Pals squeeze wearily into the rear seat.

MANOOJ
(to his neighbor)
Our farm has died, so we are moving to Calcutta to become rich!

Hasari and Aloka look at each other: If only it were the pursuit of wealth and not survival. The woman understands. And now the BUS GRINDS forward and the Pals look back. Hasari coughs, suppresses it... as silence falls.

The elder Pals stand huddled together in the dust and we see, nestled behind a boulder at the roadside, a tiny, blue flower -- beautiful and fragile, but like all things alive, determined to live... and we hear the sound of a DOZEN VOICES CHANTING a quiet mantra in unison as we --

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. ASHRAM - ANOTHER FLOWER - DAY

This flower floats gently in a bowl of water. The TITLES END as we PULL BACK SLOWLY to reveal a dozen Anglos, several Indians, and one Kenyan seated cross-legged before an aging Yogi, who's quietly urging the suppliants to find "their light, allow your white light to fill your spirit's eye." Above, ceiling fans move the air.

(CONTINUED)
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As we PAN the group, we see that everyone has his/her eyes closed in earnest meditation... until we COME TO an American, MAX LOEB, 29, who pops open first his right eye -- looks to his right and left -- closes his right eye and opens his left eye -- looks left and right... and then, instead of continuing the mantra and the search for his white light, expels a stream of air through his pursed lips, making a vibrating, flatulent sound, one indicative of sizeable frustration and dismissal.

MAX

Get serious.

Around him, other single eyes pop open, searching for the source of this unmeditative sound. Max nods and smiles a wry smile as if to say: This just ain't doin' it for me, folks.

INT. SPARTAN ROOM - TRUMPET - DAY

Max closes the trumpet case and starts chucking his clothes and books in a knapsack and a small valise. We notice the Hebrew letter chai on a gold chain around his neck. His girl friend, BETSY KAHN, overdressed somewhat in an Indian style, endeavors to exercise the inner peace she's been pursuing...

BETSY

I swear to God, you never give anything enough time! What did you expect in five days, Max?

MAX

Only what they promise in the brochure: Inner peace, serenity, and a nice chant that gets rid of this rock in my gut. E.S.T., they do you in a weekend.

BETSY

I would really appreciate it if you wouldn't be terribly glib just now, Max.

That's okay with Max, who's willing to eschew communication of all kinds and just finish heaving his stuff in the valise.

BETSY

Am I to assume you'll be at the airport in Calcutta a week from tomorrow?

(CONTINUED)
CONTINUED:

MAX
Impossible to predict, Betsy Ilene Kahn. Maybe you better give me my ticket.

BETSY
Screw you, Max -- I paid for it! How many times am I going to let you walk out on me and come back?

MAX
I think only you can answer that, Betsy Ilene Kahn.

She slaps him.

MAX
Do you really think that's an appropriate way to get rid of your Western rage, Bets?

She swings at him again. He catches her hand hard in his fist.

MAX
One slap is romantic. Two would call for retaliation... Lend me a hundred dollars.

She yanks free, begins to chant her mantra as he grabs his knapsack and valise and goes out the door. Now, she's silent and, in the simplest sense, deeply hurt. She can't help herself; she cares. We STAY WITH her a moment as we --

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. COUNTRY AIRPORT (ASSAM) - WINDING ROAD - DAY

Cool, lush hills. A little pack of single-engine two-and four-seaters. Max, in shorts and University of Miami T-shirt, hot, sweaty, appears around a bend in the approach road.

INT. AIRPORT - WAITING ROOM

A small service desk. A CLERK, who doubles as Ground Control on the microphone, passing on the prevailing wind and the active runway. We hear the STATIC-BACKED VOICE of a PILOT, giving his call numbers, then announcing he's clear for immediate takeoff on the active runway. The Clerk CLICKS off and finds Max.

(CONTINUED)
CONTINUED:

MAX
How you doin'? 

The Clerk gives Max a warm smile.

CLERK
Hello.

MAX
I've always wanted to walk into a little airport just about like this one and ask the guy at the counter the following question. Ready?

The Clerk nods; he's at Max's service.

MAX
When's the next flight to anywhere?

CLERK
To Bombay. Tomorrow, at one o'clock in the afternoon.

A beat --- the Clerk with his smile, Max with his, one simply warm, the other giving off simmering heat.

EXT. AIRPORT - LOW ANGLE - DAY

Max sits on the ground, up against the building, playing a jazz line quietly and rather well on his trumpet. A pair of well-shod feet ENTER the FRAME. Max looks up.

ANOTHER ANGLE

The rubicund face of VEEJAY CHATTERGEE, 50, and more British than Churchill. Behind him, his cherubic wife, RAVI... and making her way toward the enclave of small planes, their daughter, MANUBAI, 26.

VEEJAY
I say, are you looking for a way out of here? We have an extra seat. Where are you wanting to go?

Max's eyes flick from Veejay to the back view of Manubai as she continues on and back to Veejay.

MAX
I'm wanting to go wherever you're wanting to take me.
INT. 180 FOUR-SEATER - DAY

Max is cramped into the back seat with the plump Ravi.

ANOTHER ANGLE

We see now that, contrary to our assumption that Veejay would be in the left seat, it’s Manubai who’s flying the plane. The NOISE of the ENGINE forces them to speak somewhat loudly.

VEEJAY
We were among the fortunate back in '48. We got out of East Bengal before partition destroyed so many. We make mattresses. The Rajah Double Spring.

Veejay has an old flask out.

VEEJAY
We don't have a flight attendant on this flight...
(passing the flask)
Are you a musician, Mr. Loeb?

MAX
Unattached trumpet player and recently-certified associate guru.

As he takes a hit on the flask, Max's eye focuses on the little mirror on the dash. In it he can see Manubai's eyes. If we were to judge by what he sees in them, she doesn't find him the least bit amusing. He smiles his smile at her.

EXT. HOWRAH STATION (CALCUTTA) - DAY (EARLY MORNING)

A huge bridge dominates the skyline. The train trundles to a stop, its WHISTLE clearing the way. People hang on its sides, sit on the roof... and now flood the platform, flowing into the station, clearing a view for us of the Pals, clinging to their baggage in the middle of this human anthill.

CLOSE ON THEM (MOVING)

Hands reach out with sweets to sell, with tea, asking for money.

MANOOJ
Daddy, I'm scared.

(CONTINUED)
HASARI
Scared? No -- why? This is very exciting. As soon as we get to our friend's house, everything will be fine.

But, despite Hasari's charade of confidence, they (and we) are overwhelmed by the size of the station and the desperate energy of the humanity around them. As they press on, a small beggar woman huddled on the platform turns her eyes eerily on Manooj... as a deformed hand stretches INTO the FRAME. Aloka senses someone: A beggar, face half-hidden and eaten away by leprosy. This terrifying image presses the boys tightly to their mother and moves Hasari to encircle Armita with one hand and attempt to wrap the other three inside the embrace of his other hand. It does not seem possible that he can protect all of them against the predatory eyes watching them. He moves them quickly to a wall...

HASARI
Wait right here. Don't move.

WITH HASARI

He moves to a line of VENDORS, shows a piece of paper to one, as he digs out his precious screw of money to make a purchase of sweets from the Vendor.

HASARI
Please, can you direct me to my friend at this address? We are to stay with him.

The Vendor gives the address a look, shows it to the Vendor next to him. Both look at Hasari.

VENDOR #1
There's no such address as this in Calcutta.

HASARI
But that's not possible.

VENDOR #1
Of course it is possible! I have lived here all my life. You are new. Who would know if a place exists or does not?

VENDOR #2
Bombay, perhaps. Delhi. Look there.

(CONTINUED)
CONTINUED:

Dear God, what now? Stunned, Hasari hands Vendor #1 a rupee and, with the sweets, turns back to his family, his face going through a magical transformation as he prepares to suggest to the family that all is well.

EXT. CHOWRINGHEE LANE - DAY (MIDDAY SUN)

A few clean and cared-for Ambassador cars sweep into the gateway of the Grand Hotel, past a gateman.

RACK FOCUS TO:

FEET - MAIDAN

Feet tramping the pulsating tarmac, sending up dust.

ANOTHER ANGLE

The Pals, scared, dispirited, weary, consumed by the crowd. They've been walking a long time. Shambu cries; Aloka tries to ease his fear. They stop numbly at the edge of the park, put their bundles down against a long wall.

Across the way, a thin policeman shares a cigarette with a group of traders. There is a deeply fearful look in Hasari's eyes, a look he is having difficulty controlling now. He needs to revive the family's confidence. He takes out his precious bundle of rupees and gives one to Manooj. Manooj, though, is fixed on the cinema across the street. Hasari indicates a stall just across the main road.

HASARI

Manooj, go and get some fruit.
Come straight back.

Delighted with his task, Manooj sets off, his eyes on the marquee of the theater with its huge cardboard cutout of Kumar Kapur, starring in Hot Gun. Hasari calls out to him to watch where he's going; the mere crossing of the street is a potential parental nightmare. A hand ruffles Manooj's head and a TALL MAN with dark eyes and a sweet smile comes at the boy's anxious parents.

GANGOOLY (TALL MAN)

Yes, hello, brother. Bihar, am I correct?

HASARI

Yes, how did you know?

(CONTINUED)
CONTINUED:

Hasari is torn between speaking to the man and watching his son's incredible journey across the street.

GANGOOLY
Let me say only that the terrible malevolence that has visited your part of the country affects us all.

HASARI
Three years without rain. Nothing came out of the earth but debts.

GANGOOLY
Terrible. And now, the family on the street. It is not acceptable.

(smile widens)
And if I can't help, my name is not Mr. Gangooly... Which, blessedly, it is.

And now a smile as full as the sky above.

EXT. SMALL BUILDING IN BACK STREET - DAY

A brick slides out of the wall.

We're BEHIND the brick and see Gangooly's soft face as he reaches in and pulls out a key.

The street is small and empty. Though the houses are nothing much, to the Pals, they look like palaces.

Manooj and Shambu run about in delight. Gangooly motions for quiet. With a flourish, he opens the door.

INT. SMALL ROOM - DAY

Gangooly enters, glances around, waves the Pals in. They're amazed. There's a cage occupied by two parrots. In one corner, a small altar dedicated to the goddess Lakshmi is decorated with some flowers and, behind a torn, plastic curtain in a corner, part kitchen, part wash place, containing a tap with running water.

GONGOOLY
Be free -- look around.

On the faces of the family is one thought: Is it possible? Amrita goes right to the parrots.

GANGOOLY
They'll need feeding. Give them seed. But don't spoil them.

(CONTINUED)
CONTINUED:

He bows briefly before the altar as he moves to the washing area.

GANGOOLY
And now, one of the miracles of life in the city. One and two...

He turns on the tap and a stream of brown WATER GURGLES out. The Pals are hypnotized, the fists around their hearts begin to ease.

GANGOOLY
Holy water from the Ganges! Flows out forever. Come -- touch it.

Manooj and Shambu put their hands under the tap.

GANGOOLY
Drink! It's as pure as the dew on Shiva's lips.

They drink. Gangooly claps in delight... and beckons Hasari aside.

FAVORING GANGOOLY AND HASARI

GANGOOLY
Now, this place is yours for two weeks. My cousin, Moti, is away, traveling. Normally, the rent takes fifty rupees for a week, but for a brother, forty. No, don't thank me.

Hasari pulls out his little screw of money.

HASARI
I have only seventy-five, but as soon as I have work...

GANGOOLY
Give me the fifty, pay the rest next week. You'll find work, I trust you. Aren't I from Bihar, too? Yes.

And the money is in his hand. He joins his hands together.

GANGOOLY
You are pleased? Then Mr. Gangooly is pleased. It's how I am.

(CONTINUED)
CONTINUED:

He turns on his heel and he's gone. For a moment, the Pals are still, swept from the brink of catastrophe to salvation... and now, as one, they release their sheer and utter joy.

INT. CHATTERGEE STAIRCASE - DAY

Ravi and Veejay leading Max up the grand staircase, Manubai in the foyer, looking after them.

INT. GUEST ROOM - DAY

Ravi leads the way into a lovely guest bedroom.

RAVI
I hope this is all right. The room hasn't been aired or the bed turned, but --

VEEJAY
Oh, he doesn't care about that, do you, Max? Here, look here.

Veejay opens a little cupboard, stocked with liquor.

VEEJAY
Help yourself. Be comfortable. Ravi, come on, go, go, let's leave the young man to himself.

Obediently, Ravi goes. Veejay follows. Max goes to the window.

HIS POV

The beautiful Manubai in the garden.

MAX

He lies down on the bed. He's found Nirvana.

INT. MAIN ROOM - DAY

It's Hasari who watches now. There's LAUGHTER from Aloka and Amrita. Joyful SHOUTS from the boys. Hasari is alone in the main room, on his knees, in front of the pile of their baggage and bundles. He turns his attention from the laughter to a just-opened, old suitcase. He takes out a small tea box. Opens it delicately.

(CONTINUED)
CONTINUED:

It's full of something brown. He pushes his fingers in and feels this bit of earth with a tenderness that's almost religious, puts a pinch to his nose and breathes it in. The LAUGHTER and SHOUTING from the bathing area is GROWING.

INT. BATHING AREA

Shambu is paddling near the tap. Aloka is bending over the drain and Amrita is rinsing her heavy, dark hair with a pot. Manooj is nearby, rubbing himself with an old towel. Hasari enters unnoticed and looks at the group with tenderness... and with gratitude for their good fortune.

A MAN, red with anger, yanks the curtain aside, stares. The family freezes. Aloka's hair drips unnoticed on her sari.

MAN
What are you doing here? Who are you?

HASARI
My name is Pal, Hasari. Mr. Gangooly rented this space to --

MAN
Mr. Who?

HASARI
Gangooly. You must be his cousin, Mr. Moti.

MAN
I don't know any Gangooly and my name is Binal and this is my home -- get out!

The furious Binal, followed by the Pals, goes into the main part of the room. A small crowd has been attracted by the noise.

HASARI
But this is true. We paid him a deposit of fifty --

BINAL
A man goes out because he has to work, and some beggar tries to move in while his back is turned.

(CONTINUED)
CONTINUED:

This while Binal has begun to throw things out onto the street, though this cleansing of his home doesn't stop him from picking up a stick. The odd sympathizer meets with...

BINAL

So, should I suffer if they are so stupid to jump into the first mouth that wants to eat them?

He turns with the stick on Hasari.

BINAL

You're lucky I don't kill you!

Hasari looks at Manooj, who drops his eyes. They collect the remainder of their possessions and hurry out the door.

EXT. SMALL STREET - DAY

Full of neighbors. There's a suppressed violence in the air. A man pushes Aloka. Sweat streaming down his face, Hasari confronts the man. A WOMAN pushes the men apart.

WOMAN

Go to the river. Try to squeeze in there.

EXT. VICTORIA MONUMENT - STREET - NIGHT (DUSK)

Calcutta broiling: Buses, vendors, carts, rickshaws, children beg at car windows. The Pals stand, uncertain, and for the first time a rickshaw fills Hasari's eye, carrying two passengers. But now he shoulders his burden and leads the family toward the river. We HOLD until they grow small against the setting sun, gleaming red against the white domes of the Victoria Monument.

INT. CHATTERGEE'S LIBRARY - TORSO - NIGHT

Moving through the dark, a figure, touching things, looking at photographs of the Chattergees. We hear a MUFFLED DIALOGUE mixed with the SINGING a la Dean Martin of "Everybody Loves Somebody Sometime": "Goddamn it, boy, what's the matter with you? -- "Everybody loves somebody sometime" -- "Go for it, son!" -- "Sure, Dad, whatever you say, Dad." -- "Everybody falls in love somehow" -- "You're the dad, Dad." Now, a humidor. Max opens it, takes out a cigar, takes two. Takes five. Senses someone. Turns.
ANOTHER ANGLE

Ravi in her bathrobe.

MAX
I'm starving.

He gives her his best saint's smile.

RAVI
Well, you don't want to eat those awful cigars. Come with me, we'll wake up the cook, she'll fix you something proper.

EXT. KITCHEN - WINDOW - NIGHT

THROUGH the window, we see the bleary-eyed cook laying out food as Ravi chatters away at Max, he with a beatific grin on his face as he feeds himself.

EXT. RIVER BANK - HOWRAH BRIDGE - DAY

The bridge etched against the dawn sky. The corpse of an indigent is collected and put on a cart.

MANOOJ
With his eyes open, watching the dead man being removed.

FAMILY

After their humiliating flight, they found refuge here. Tiny figures huddled together with their baggage and bundles, near a tree, not far from the steps that dip down to the smooth water. Hasari's eyes, too, are on the dead man, that warning. He kneels beside Manooj, strokes him. The boy's eyes turns to the man's, wondering if the man can provide for them.

HASARI
Don't let it frighten you. You have to be brave. I know we'll find work today.

Fear and doubt fill Manooj's eyes. He nods.

EXT. DOCKS - DAY

Hasari at the gates, the family huddled together in the b.g. The man behind the gate shakes his head, points.
ANOTHER ANGLE

A line of a hundred men stretches from a door. Hasari is on the edge of panic, but when he turns to the family, he's wearing his confident smile. As before, he gathers the family into the protectorate of his arms and guides them onward. As he pushes off into the sea of humanity, we PULL BACK AND UP, FILLING the FRAME WITH street upon street, disappearing Hasari.

FROM STREET - INTO WORKSHOP - HASARI AND OWNER

Two plump men in shirt sleeves look coolly at Hasari. The elder shakes his head. The younger shows Hasari the door.

Outside, an increasingly desperate Hasari finds Aloka before a small shrine, saying a prayer.

EXT. BARA BAZAR - DAY

Aloka huddled with Manooj and Amrita. Hasari talking to the owner of a small market stall. Shambu is peering into a shop with male mannequins in the window.

INT. MEN'S SHOP - MOVING MIRROR

In the moving mirror we see counters and shelves of men's clothing.

The mirror stops at Max slipping into a kurta before an audience of Ravi, Manubai, and a salesman.

RAVI
It's not extravagant at all. You can't go around all week in your tribal garb.

Max sees a boy's face pressed to the glass: he indicates the shirt, for the boy's approval. The boy smiles a wonderful smile.

RAVI
Now he looks civilized, doesn't he, Manubai?

MANUBAI
Almost.

Max looks at her. She at him.
EXT. MEN'S SHOP - DAY

Man leans down, whispers to the smiling boy...

MAX
You sure I look all right?

The little boy nods. Max slips him several rupees... and he, Manubai, and Ravi fold themselves into her tiny car as --

ANOTHER ANGLE

Shambu runs to his dejected family.

SHAMBU
Look! A man gave me these many moneys!

HASARI
What man? Why -- did you ask him for money?

SHAMBU
He just gave it to me.

HASARI
Where is he?

Shambu looks, but the car's gone.

HASARI
Don't do that. We're not beggars.

Shambu is devastated. Out of his own desperation, Hasari feels he's been a little rough on the boy. He holds him close.

HASARI
Go back to the river. Wait for me by the tree. Don't go anywhere. Do you understand?

Aloka, the boys nod. We WATCH them as Hasari heads off, quickly becoming a small figure disappearing into the sea.

EXT. JUTE MILL DAY - LATE AFTERNOON SUN

Starting to sink. We PAN DOWN TO Hasari stepping to a grilled window as the man ahead moves out.
INT. JUTE MILL - DAY

A flaking gray wall, half-obscured with moldering files. The grilled window lets in a little light and the quiet supplications of those outside.

An old CLERK at a desk. A voice calls out. The Clerk looks up, crosses to the grill.

Hasari's tense face through the bars. A TRUCK RUMBLES past, drowning out the words... except these: "...trade union." The Clerk shakes his head sadly. On the verge of panic, Hasari hangs onto the window...

CLERK
Do you have family?

HASARI
Yes, yes of course. But I'm three days without work. I'll take anything.

The Clerk digs in his pocket, presses two rupees on Hasari.

CLERK
Here, now go away.

HASARI
No, I don't want you to give me --

The next man in line forcibly moves Hasari out of the way.

CLERK
In this city, a man with a family can't be proud. Take it!

The Clerk waves him away, turns his attention to the next man.

INT. CHATTERGEE RECEPTION ROOM - DAY (LATE AFTERNOON)

Manubai's face. Then Max's. Then hers. Then his. Looking at each other. Five days. Kiss. Ravi.

MAX
I said you have three days to get me into bed, and I'm betting you can't do it.

(CONTINUED)
CONTINUED:

MANUBAI
It's all right for you to use my mother as your tour guide and meal ticket, because she'll get something nice out of it. But what would I get?

He stares at her a moment, then gets up, goes around the table.

MAX
Well, gee, I don't know. Maybe I could say something so amusing that you'd laugh so hard it would break that hot poker you have up your ass.

She stares at him. He bends to kiss her. She doesn't pull away... but after a moment he realizes she isn't responding. He continues the kiss, but he opens his eyes... to find her staring at him. He pulls back. They stare at each other another moment, then Max senses someone in the doorway.

RAVI
Staring at them, disappointment filling her eyes.

MAX
The same sound of frustration and ennui he made in the ashram.

EXT. CHATTERGEE HOME - DAY
His arm around Max, Veejay guides the young man toward a waiting taxi.

VEEJAY
Believe me, I understand, but you know how women are. Do you have enough money?

Max gives him a non-committal shrug. Veejay winks, stuffs the money into Max's pocket.

EXT. GREEN ACRES COURTYARD - COW - DAY (LATE AFTERNOON)
Bare feet... and then sneakered feet step over the sleeping bovine, who turns a disinterested eye up.
ANOTHER ANGLE

Max is guided by a grumpy hall PORTER wearing an off-white shirt and bellbottoms through the walled and well planted courtyard of an inexpensive hotel. Max gives the cow a bemused eye...

INT. HOTEL ROOM - DAY

The room is utterly utilitarian. The Porter turns on a ceiling fan, sending an army of cockroaches scurrying for calmer terrain. Max clearly doesn't care for cockroaches.

PORTER
It pleases you?

MAX
No fruit basket? No mini bar?

Max hands the Porter several rupees.

PORTER
Bar? Of course -- many, many. But make care, Sahib. Please, for me. If it is lady you like to know -- yes? -- you let me. Huh? Very sweet girl, good nature, very sweet. Or boy, very good...

Max puts a finger on the Porter's head, turns him for the door.

PORTER
No like boy? Something then for smoke -- mmmh, very good for smoke!

AT DOOR

Max eases the Porter out. As the door is closing...

PORTER
Maybe you like two girls -- look a little Chinese, but very great pleasure.

Max smiles his smile and disappears the Porter behind the closed door. The smile disappears and the FAN gets his attention; it has an annoying rhythm and sound. He flicks the switch, but the fan continues to snap around.

(CONTINUED)
CONTINUED:

He stares at it... and startles us by suddenly flicking out a hand and grabbing the blade, stopping the fan. He lets go. The fan is still. He carries his knapsack to the tub; it has brown stains along the middle and the water has a brown tinge as it flows out of the tap. He sits on the edge of the tub, dumps his knapsack on the floor, picks up a half-dozen pamphlets from the ashram.

CLOSE ON PAMPHLETS

Guides to inner peace.

RESUME

He wings the pamphlets at the trashcan.

EXT. RIVERBANK - HOWRAH BRIDGE - DAY (EARLY EVENING)

Hasari comes around the corner of a warehouse, a smile on his face, clutching some bananas and dried grain. His relief -- and ours -- is short-lived.

TREE AND BANK

The space where he left the family has been cleared and taken over by trucks. He's lost his family.

HOWRAH BRIDGE ROAD

A group of Hindus are celebrating a puja, the women singing canticles at the top of their lungs; the men tossing a little boy happily back and forth... as the panic-stricken Hasari rushes up.

HASARI

My wife, my children...

Hasari rushes on. Suddenly we --

CUT TO:

UNDER BRIDGE - DAY

His head turns and his eyes look this way, that way... until out of the near silence, we hear a distant, extraordinary word...
CONTINUED:

CHILD (O.S.)
Daaaaaadddddyyyyy!

The word catches Hasari's ear. He looks into the sea of people along the river bank under the bridge.

CHILD (O.S.)
Daaaaadddddyyyyy!

As in a dream, Shambu rises up out of the sea of bodies ... and runs to his father.

SHAMBU
Daaaaadddddyyyyy!

Now, Aloka, Amrita, Manooj appear, rising up out of the sea, ending Hasari's nightmare.

A warrior returning from battle, Hasari engulfs the little boy.

HASARI
I told you to remain where I left you! I told you to stay there!

MANOOJ
The police came!

SHAMBU
We said we had to meet you, but they didn't care! They were mean!

As before, Hasari tries to engulf the rest of his family in the protectorate of his arms. In the b.g., Arun and his family.

ALOKA
These friends have found space. They will share with us.

Hasari looks at the tiny space. The roof is cardboard and cloth and half an old movie poster featuring the actor Kumar Kapur. Hasari looks at his tiny bit of food, debates a moment... then puts his hands together, addresses these generous people.

HASARI
I would be proud if you would share our food with us.

Everyone looks at the food; there is no disguising their hunger.
EXT. BRIDGE - NIGHT

Distant transistor MUSIC as we PAN DOWN: The Pal children sleep despite the QUIET MOANS and nightmare CRIES around them, the two boys huddled together, Amrita close to her mother.

Hasari comes out of the dark. Aloka looks at him. He shakes his head. He slumps beside her. Aloka strokes Hasari, looking lovingly at him.

ALOKA
I remember the first time I saw you, on the day of our marriage. Wearing a bright yellow turban. You asked me my name and you said, 'You are a very beautiful girl and I am wondering whether you will find me appealing.'

He strokes her tenderly in return... but now, overwhelmed with despair, she begins to weep.

HASARI
What?

She doesn't want to say it, doesn't want to wake the children.

HASARI
It's all right -- what?

ALOKA
I miss the village. There I could help.

Hasari pulls Aloka close, strokes her.

EXT. GREEN ACRES - NIGHT

The sky turns red. The Porter looks up, shakes his head: Poor young man, stuck with only a trumpet for company.

INT. MAX'S ROOM

Max sits on the floor in a corner and plays as we hear the sound of a fierce WHISTLE and a SCREAMING ENGINE.

EXT. SETTLEMENT - CLOSE ON BULLDOZER - DAWN

A gigantic earthmover lurches into position.
ANOTHER ANGLE

Swarming police.

PALS

Awaken -- startled, disoriented. Aloka gentles the children as Hasari moves instinctively toward the threat.

SCENE

A black ambassadorial car pulls up, out of which steps a BABU. A microphone and speaker has been set up. Another car unloads several politicos with party banners. A minion hands the Babu the mike; he wants to get on with it before this turns into a political rally. Hasari is close to him, as is Arun.

BABU

The municipality has directed us to carry out the destruction of this settlement. All of you must go -- now!

For a moment there is a babble of fear and frustration. Then from Hasari's side, Arun confronts the Babu.

ARUN

For what reason?

The Babue appears disconcerted. He's not accustomed to the poor asking questions.

BABU

Because this settlement is impeding construction work.

ARUN

We're not moving! Why should we move? Who is the municipality? We are! This is our home!

BABU

I have my orders.

ARUN

If we're driven from here, where should we go?

BABU

I'll give you five minutes to gather your things. Then, the settlement comes down.

(CONTINUED)
CONTINUED:

ARUN
Why should you alone be burdened
with such a task? Let me help!

Arun begins to tear his shelter apart, and to heave the
pieces at the Babu, who retreats. Others soon take up
the call to vent their frustration, hurling things at
the police and at the driver of the tractor. Quickly
we've got a full-scale riot. The police wade into the
crowd, pounding people with their sticks, Arun one of
the first to get hit. He staggers into Hasari's arms.

FAVORING PALS/ARUN AND HIS FAMILY

Unbelievable! Panic-stricken, Hasari and Aloka gather
the children and their few belongings... as beside them
a woman goes down from a stick to the head; Aloka stops
instinctively to help the woman, but Hasari grabs her,
trying to shelter her and the children as well as Arun's
wife and children, clutching Arun to him as in the chaos
they manage to escape.

EXT. CHURCH - CLOSE ON BILLBOARD - DAY

On the billboard: A maharajah sleeping snugly on a thick
mattress. From his dreamland he inquires solicitously:
"Have you ever thought of a Rajah Double Sprung as a
present?" We PAN DOWN and FIND the Pals and Arun and his
family, panting, terrified, beneath the sign.

SHAMBU
Daddy, are we going to die here?

Hasari can see on everyone's face this question.

HASARI
No! Today, I'm just a mangy dog
on the street, but soon, I swear,
I'll look other men in the eye!
(a beat)
I swear.

Yet on his face we see the extraordinary pressure to make
this promise reality.

EXT. SIDE OF RESTAURANT

Hasari reaches the head of a line and receives a small
handout. Turning away, he studies the morsel of food.
His head aches, his belly screams with hunger... but he
takes only a single bite, then carefully wraps the rest
in a cloth and knots it.

(CONTINUED)
CONTINUED:

He feels a tug at his elbow. It's a 15-year-old BOY with thick, scholarly spectacles.

RAFIK (BOY)
Why live like a beggar when you can live like a maharajah?

Hasari stares at the boy.

INT. BLOOD DISPENSARY - CLOSE ON HASARI'S ARM - DAY
A needle injected, blood flowing into a bottle.

ANOTHER ANGLE
Hasari seated on a stool, watching his blood leave his body, his face broken out in perspiration.

HASARI
I thought you were only taking a little.

ATTENDANT
We pay more, we take more.

HASARI
I'm feeling a little dizzy.

ATTENDANT
It'll pass.

HIS POV
Rafik and a thin man chatting easily and exchanging cigarettes with another attendant. His vision BLURS.

HASARI AND NURSE
With his free hand, he begins to grapple for the Attendant to keep his balance, starts to fall... and the SCREEN GOES BLACK.

FADE IN:

EXT. DISPENSARY - DAY
A woozy Hasari gives Rafik his share; Rafik in turn gives the thin man his share. The thin man bows his farewell.

(CONTINUED)
CONTINUED:

RAFIK

Blood is the oil well of the poor, brother. Now, give me another three and I'll give you these.

He opens his hand with its dirty nails. In it lie a little group of pills, like highly-colored sweets.

HASARI

What are those?

RAFIK

Vitamins. Take these and you can give again in a week.

While Hasari considers, Rafik pours the pills into Hasari's hand, takes the three rupees. Hasari downs the pills.

RAFIK

One week. Here. The same time.

And he's gone, leaving Hasari, woozy but at least, for the moment, blessed to count his money.

INT. MAX'S ROOM - NIGHT

Max lies on his messed bed, contorted, with his feet up over his head against the wall. A book lies open beside him. A half-eaten room service meal, many hours old, moulders on the bedside table. Max is babbling a mock sports case into his fist...

MAX

They're in the shotgun. There's the snap from center, the clock is running -- five, four, three -- he has an open man at the Notre Dame twenty for the victory... and he freezes. He freezes! Mr. Choke chokes. The fans go --

A KNOCK at the door. Max shuts up, falls off the wall. He crosses to the door. Opens it. POOMINA is 16, beautiful and exotic-looking behind her excessive makeup.

ANOTHER ANGLE - FAVORING MAX

The porter pushes the girl gently into the room, smiling at Max, nodding. The door is closed.
MAX AND POOMINA

He may have been receptive to a "sweet, young girl," but not a kid in her teens.

MAX
Got an I.D. on you?
(she doesn't get it)
How old are you?

POOMINA
Twenty, sahib.

MAX
I buy that.

She approaches him seductively.

POOMINA
I can do anything you want, sahib.

She fingers the Hebrew letter at Max's throat, on its gold chain. For a moment, Max is mesmerized by this child; but then, as she begins more serious ministrations, he pulls back.

MAX
Hold it, time out. Time, there's time out on the field.

POOMINA
Is problems, sahib?

MAX
Is problems, yeah, just a couple.

POOMINA
No, please, yes, I can --

There's something desperate in her that makes him put a finger to her lips and say...

MAX
How 'bout some chow?
(she doesn't get it)
I was just about to order some room service. Food. I call, they come, we eat.

She stares at him.

INT. MAX'S ROOM - NIGHT (HALF HOUR LATER)

Max smokes a Monte Cristo and watches Poomina, like a frightened little animal, devour the last of a Green Acres room service meal and then wrap a small piece of fish in the paper napkin.

(CONTINUED)
CONTINUED:

She looks up at him, delivers a small burp. Covers her mouth in charming embarrassment.

POOMINA

Now, you are ready for great pleasure, yes?

MAX

Watching you eat was my great pleasure. Now you go home.

As he escorts her toward the door, Poomina is distressed. Max realizes she can't leave empty-handed. He pulls out some notes.

MAX

For you.

She hasn't given up, though, and as he takes the money, she stands on tiptoe and kisses him. Torn, Max begins to respond. He stops himself, his grip on her causing her discomfort. His breath comes in little bursts.

MAX

You're a very wet kisser. Work on it, get in touch in five years.

He leads her toward the door. Like some lunatic comedy, she resists. He pushes. She locks her knees. He opens the door.

MAX

Goddamn it, cut it out! Now, good night.

He muscles her out the door, closes it, wipes his lips. He stares at a parade of cockroaches gliding along the wall as he listens to her CRYING quietly on the other side of the door. He debates... and he loses. Opens the door. Poomina stands there; the tears stop and a lip-twitching smile lights her face.

MAX

Five years already? Gee, time really flies when you have no moral conviction.

She slides into his arms, pressing against him. With his shoulder, he closes the door, leaving us outside.

INT. BACK ALLEY - BAR - FLAMING LIGHT - NIGHT

A bare light bulb; a SCRATCHY vinyl RECORD on a turntable.

(CONTINUED)
CONTINUED:

Poomina watches Max do a sleight-of-hand trick with a coin. He tosses it up, brings his hands past each other, then holds out his fists; she picks on... but the other holds the penny. Fooled, she laughs. He does it again; she points to one fist -- empty -- then other -- also empty. Max reaches behind her ear and... produces the coin. She loves it, her laughter escalating. But then she seems to read something in the b.g. where we see four thugs, two of whom will become known to us as THE GOONDA, a capo to the local "mafia" chieftan, and ASHOKA, son of the local Godfather. Ashoka works on a pimple on his chin. The Goonda meticulously cleans a spot of mud with spit from one of his expensive new running shoes. Max eyes the thugs eyeing him.

MAX
Short guys! Quit lookin' at us!

This remark goes over big with the thugs. Max doesn't care. He knocks off the last of the beer in his bottle. The bartender brings them two shots of something in two unmatched glasses.

POOMINA
Special drink for you, sahib.  
Only the most man can drink it.  
You make try.  For me.

MAX
For you, I would drink battery acid.

POOMINA
Who that finish first.  I bet!

She puts her glass to her lips and, in a childish, exaggerated way, mimes waiting for him to commence a drinking race with her. The two of them toss off what's in their glasses. The bangla in Max's glass is stronger than battery acid. He does an elaborate routine involving the pain, the surprise, the sheer awfulness of the drink. But puts it down with mock machismo.

POOMINA
I beat!

MAX
I really don't think so -- oh no, nay, nay! I never lose the truly irrelevant contest.

POOMINA
We have fun some more. I bet again!

(CONTINUED)
CONTINUED:

She turns to the bartender, calls for two more. All the while, in the b.g., The Goonda and his two thugs watch emotionlessly and Ashoka works on his acne.

EXT. BAR - NIGHT

Max sings "Take It to the Limit" with enormous inebriated sincerity as Poomina helps him out of the bar. There's a big black motorcycle parked outside. Max glances at it as they start down the alley. As he looks back to the road ahead, he finds The Goonda in front of him. Max isn't so drunk that he doesn't sense what this is about. He looks behind him. Indeed, the other two goons are there. Ashoka straddles the big cycle.

MAX
Well well. Seek punishment and ye shall find.

Knowing what's coming, Max nevertheless unleashes a beautiful howl and tries to trample The Goonda off-tackle. From behind, he's hit with a length of stick. He goes down, looks up through blasted eyes at Ashoka as two sticks now land against his shoulder and his head...

EXT. MAHARAJAH SIGN - NIGHT

The Pals sleep beneath the sign. Hasari awakens from restive sleep to the sound of a FIGHT. He gets up. The others awaken.

ARUN
Don't go -- what are you doing?

HASARI
It sounds like someone needs help.

Hasari bolts for the corner.

ALLEYWAY

As Hasari turns into the head of the alley, he can see three men beating someone, a fourth man standing off to the side, watching.

HASARI
What are you doing?
(calling back)
A man's being beaten here!

As Hasari runs down the alley, the MOTORCYCLE FIRES UP and SCREAMS OFF and the three goons take flight.
HASARI AND MAX

Hasari runs up, reaches out to Max, who's barely on his feet. As Hasari touches Max, Max turns and belts Hasari in the nose, nailing Hasari to the wall as Max collapses at Hasari's feet. Hasari grabs his nose with one hand and kneels beside the fallen Max... as a shadow moves and startles Hasari. He peers into the dark... and Poomina steps into the light.

INT. CLINIC/SCHOOL (CITY OF JOY) - MAX'S POV - CRUCIFIX - DAY

The crucifix sways. Now Max's eyes RACK FOCUS TO the cherubic face of JOAN BETHAL, peering AT the CAMERA without sympathy.

ANOTHER ANGLE

Max on a cot in a tiny, spare room, a butterfly bandage under one eye. Joan, Irish, short, stout, hovers over him. Behind her, Hasari Pal.

JOAN
Good morning, junior, welcome to our country.

Max manages to sit up. Wishes he hadn't.

MAX
Oh, I like the way the room moves in circles. (checking out his accommodations)
I suppose I should inquire where I am.

JOAN
You're in the City of Joy.

MAX
Is that geographic or spiritual?

JOAN
Oh, now we require that each visitor decide that for himself. This gentleman and a young lady brought you here.

MAX
Did I do that to your nose? (as Hasari nods)
I'm sorry.

(CONTINUED)
CONTINUED:

Hasari shrugs, smiles... and a gigantic rat drops in Max's lap. He leaps to his feet and against the wall. The rat scurries away.

MAX
What was that -- a Shetland pony?

JOAN
I would have to inspect it more closely, but I believe that was one of our economy-size rats.

Max clambers for the door. Too late, Joan thinks to say...

JOAN
Watch your --

Max cracks his head on the door frame.

MAX
Thanks -- got it.

He ducks outside for some air.

EXT. CLINIC/SCHOOL - NIZAMUDHIN LANE - MAX'S FACE

Stunned.

SQUARE

In the dawn light, he finds himself in a small square in a slum, an open sewer running before him. He's repulsed.

MAX
Pardon the expression, but Jesus H. Christ.

From the tea shop, SURYA, a stout old Hindu man dressed in Western clothes, raises a hand in greeting to Joan. On the door Max and Joan have come through: "City of Joy Self Help School & Clinic." Across the way, a young man is dandling a baby on his knee, rubbing its back and sniffing at its neck. Small group of children around a blackboard with a teacher, MARGARETA, doing numbers. RAM CHANDAR, the rickshaw puller, readies to go out to work. Trying to orient himself, Max turns...

ANOTHER ANGLE

... to find perhaps fifty people, largely women and children, staring at him.

(CONTINUED)
CONTINUED:

He knows them by type: patients. He looks at the sign on the door.

MAX
You a doctor?

JOAN
Oh no, I'm a corporate executive. Doctor arrives at half seven, but only three days a week.

MAX
This is obviously one of those three days.

JOAN
Indeed. What brings you to our country?

MAX
I came to find my white light.

JOAN
Ah, yes. I take it you didn't find it.

MAX
Kept opening the doors and windows of my spirit, but couldn't see a goddamn thing.

JOAN
What do you do in America?

Max is slow to answer. Discreetly, Hasari hangs back, listens.

JOAN
Oh, how exciting. Must be something illegal. Are you a criminal of some sort?

MAX
I suppose that depends how you define the word: I'm a doctor.

JOAN
I see. How long are you here? Perhaps I could recruit you for --

MAX
Forget it. You've got your non-practicing Catholics. I'm a non-practicing doctor.

(CONTINUED)
CONTINUED:

JOAN
How very distressing. Why's that?

MAX
Found out I just really don't like sick people. Well, I'm outta here. I owe you one.

I can't imagine ever divining how to collect, but there are a few of us Indians, you know, who believe the tourist trade ought to be encouraged.

Max turns to Hasari. Hasari is incredibly shy, can barely meet Max's eyes.

MAX
Thank you very much. Let me...

He goes for his money.

HASARI
No, please.

Max finds his pockets empty. Then reaches for his wrist -- his watch is gone -- and then his throat -- his chai is gone, too.

JOAN
I'm afraid they cleaned you out.
Ram, here's your first rider.
(to Max)
Take this.

She holds out several rupees toward him. All eyes on them.

JOAN
Go on, it's all right. You'll owe me two.

EXT. STREET - FLYING FEET - DAY

Max in the rickshaw, Hasari running alongside Ram, an exuberant smile slashed across his face.

HASARI
You see, I can keep up.

(CONTINUED)
CONTINUED:

RAM
Keep up, of course. Anyone can run at this pace. But you think it's easy to run and to pull?

HASARI
I can do it. I could pull it.

MAX
Come on, give him a shot. He's as fast as you and looks twice as strong.

RAM
Will you still pay me when he runs you into a ditch?

MAX
Absolutely. I trust the man.

Suddenly, Ram comes to a stop.

RAM
All right, you, come, step in here.

Hasari looks on Max with enormous gratitude. Ram puts the shafts down, has a short coughing fit, spits some phlegm, looks at Max.

MAX
I hope you're taking something for that.

Ram waves him off as Hasari lifts the shafts to his hips.

RAM
Now, fine, pull, go.

Hasari tries to pull, but the center of gravity isn't easy to find. This is enormously difficult and Hasari's very clumsy at it. The street is crowded. The traffic is beginning to back up behind them. The driver and conductor of the tram let fly a tirade of insults.

RAM
See, mister! What did I tell you? Come on! What do you think this is -- some village street? You've got to move quickly.

He turns to Max.

RAM
You see, it takes a gift.

(CONTINUED)
CONTINUED:

MAX
I say he can do it. I'll bet you the fare he can do it.
(play by play)
What do you think, rickshaw fans, can he do it?

The crowd isn't in for fun. Hasari strains forward. The rickshaw moves with him. Ram moves alongside, shouting instructions and oaths. A cop comes on the run, screaming at Hasai... which makes Ram importune more strongly and Max joke more vociferously.

Even under this incredible pressure, Hasari gains confidence and begins to move quicker, earning shouts of approval from Max and Ram, who now has trouble keeping up as they make their way through the maelstrom, an avalanche of oaths following them.

INT. GODFATHER'S HOUSE - DAY

At first all we see are feet on a marble floor. The Goonda's in his running shoes, then Ram and Hasari's bare feet.

This is the partitioned splendor of an old house sprinkled with the relics of a grand colonial past. Everything is baroque, rotting and somehow impressive. Hasari has never been anywhere like this, and is caught between curiosity and fear of breathing.

INT. "THRONE ROOM"

The three men enter a large room shuttered from the sunlight -- dusty and packed with a ramshackle assortment of furniture. Two fat blue titmice perch in a cage next to ambitious plaster portrait of Napoleon.

Sitting behind a desk is Ashoka, leaning over a mirror, squeezing a balky pimple.

Near a large window, his 60-year-old father, GHATAK, in a European jacket and dhoti, works with intense concentration at repairing a pair of broken glasses with a twist of fine wire.

The three new arrivals stand silent and respectful before the desk. At last, without raising his head...

ASHOKA
Not a tongue between you then?

(CONTINUED)
CONTINUED:

RAM
Yes, yes, I am wondering, sir, we are, is it possible you might have something for my friend?

Ram indicates Hasari, as if there might be some question to whom he's referring. Ashoka attacks the pimple.

RAM
Let me explain it for your ears, sir. My cousin from Bihar has just arrived in our city --

GOONDA
They've brought a small present -- of respect.

The Goonda places a small bundle of rupees on the desk. Ashoka allows himself a disinterested glance at Hasari.

ASHOKA
So, you want to be a human horse?

RAM
Oh yes! I have personally witnessed his excellence -- yes.

ASHOKA
He doesn't talk? Can he neigh at least?
(to Hasari)
You -- do your ears function?

HASARI
Oh yes, Babu. Can I... uhm...?

ASHOKA
Neigh! Like a horse.

Ashoka pulls back his lips, shows his teeth and imitates a neigh: "Ne-igh! Ne-igh!"

HASARI
Well, yes, Babu, I can do that. Would you like me to imitate a horse?

Finished with the pimple, Ashoka wipes a finger on his shirt and takes a helping off a plate of sweetcakes as...
ANOTHER ANGLE

Behind him, The Godfather walks up to the desk, putting his glasses on. He barely glances at his son, but waves him out of the chair.

Ashoka doesn't like it, but he steps aside. As he does, he turns a look of hatred on Hasari. Through no fault of his own, Hasari has made an enemy. Ghatak chews on a pan and casts a benevolent eye on Hasari.

GHATAK
Lift your longhi.

Hasari does. The Godfather looks at his legs and thighs.

GHATAK
The wise men of our nation say that nirvana is the attainment of a state of supreme detachment. For me, nirvana is counting each evening, one by one, the rupees earned by my two thousand and forty-six rickshaws.

Hasari doesn't know whether to respond. A glance at Ram tells him not to. Ghatak gestures for Hasari to lower his longhi.

GHATAK
You are with family?

HASARI
I have a wife and three children, Babu.

GHATAK
And they must eat, heh. The world is full of open mouths.

He chews on this a moment, then opens a drawer... and holds a small, tinkling rickshaw bell toward Hasari. Hasari understands that, incredibly, he has a job. His breath is so shallow, he can barely utter his gratitude. He takes the bell.

HASARI
I shall be eternally grateful to you. From now on, I shall be as the youngest of your brothers.

GHATAK
Stay loyal. These days, it's a crop nobody plants.

The Godfather turns his beatific and Godlike smile on Hasari Pal.

(CONTINUED)
EXT. MATTRESS SIGN - DAY (EARLY EVENING)

Transitor MUSIC. The Pals load the rickshaw that stands at the road with Ram in it. There are embraces with the bruised Arun and his family.

EXT. SQUARE - NIGHT (EARLY EVENING)

We hear the BELL TINKLING as the rickshaw, pulled by Hasari, carrying Ram and Aloka (holding Shambu) arrives (Amrita and Manooj trotting beside their father). Surya, Selima, other neighbors greet them as they come. The Pals glance into the school at Joan, who's teaching an evening class.

WITH PALS

Reverentially, they follow Ram inside as Joan watches.

INT. RAM'S HUT - NIGHT

A door opens. Moonlight. Faces peer through the door. Ram lights an oil lamp. In the glow, the family looks around their tiny space. Hardly able to suppress smiles.

HASARI

Someone has blessed us. A job, a roof, a school. Soon I'll be able to send money home...

(looking at Amrita)

... and put away a little bit for your dowry.

In their excitement, the boys run.

OUTSIDE

and up to the roof, under the stars. We LOOK UP WITH them and:

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. GREEN ACRES - ON SKY - NIGHT

PAN DOWN TO Max on his balcony playing his trumpet as we continue to

DISSOLVE TO BLACK.

FADE IN:

EXT. SQUARE AND STREET (CITY OF JOY) - DAY

About twenty tattered street kids faces shining with enjoyment. They run and shout as they pursue something just out of frame.

WIDE SHOT

The cause of the excitement is Hasari running TOWARD us, feet flying, as he pulls the rickshaw, loaded with a huge sack. Manooj and Shambu are clinging to the sides of the machine.

Ram stands in the center of the square. He shouts a command and Hasari struggles to bring the rickshaw to a stop. It's not easy and Sunil -- who's arriving -- has to jump out of the way to the accompaniment of apologies from Hasari and Ram and hoots of laughter from the children.

Outside the clinic, a line of perhaps seventy-five wait patiently, watching as Hasari takes off again. The wheels of the rickshaw hit a rut. Hasari loses control, the sack tips back and Hasari is lifted into the air, feet kicking as he tries to regain his balance. Aloka and Amrita, sitting near the bawling Ram, can't hold back their laughter.

EXT. SQUARE - HIGH ANGLE - DAY

The square is set with obstacles. As Ram shouts instruction, we see Hasari negotiate them with much increased skill. He stops in front of a small group. It's his family, plus Joan and Surya. With an exhausted smile, he signs to Aloka and Amrita to get in. They do, and Hasari takes them triumphantly around the circuit.

HIGH ANGLE

Hasari's triumphant ride continues and we:

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. PARK STREET - DAY

Hasari rubs the moonstone in his ring on the shafts, then touches his heart and his forehead. A SCHOOL GIRL in uniform, approaches the rickshaw stand. We also see several other pullers, Rassoul, Chomotkar, Ramatullah.

SCHOOL GIRL

Rickshaw wallah!

(CONTINUED)
CONTINUED:

RAM
Let Hasari go!

The line of rickshaw pullers turns to Hasari. The other pullers wish him well as he comes forward. His heart pounds; ever so politely, he helps the School Girl into his carriage. She gives him the address of the St. Pius School.

HASARI
I'm sorry, I don't know where that is. You're my very first passenger.

SCHOOL GIRL
Really. Well, I hope I bring you luck.

She gives him a sweet smile.

SCHOOL GIRL
That way, and then to the right.

His moment has arrived. He looks at Ram... and thrusts his hips forward, setting off into the insanity of the traffic, eyes flicking left and right. A HORN RAILS at him and a taxi tries to run him down, calling and laughing as Hasari jumps in terror.

RAM
(calling)
Feed the police!

Other pullers laugh, call after Hasari... and as he approaches the first corner, he manages to pull out a rupee and deposit it into the hand of the impassive traffic policeman and then turn right.

EXT. ST. PIUS - DAY

The School Girl hands him a slip of paper.

SCHOOL GIRL
This is my home address. Pick me up promptly at seven each morning.

HASARI
Yes, thank you, you can depend on me.

The girl runs into the school yard, met immediately by friends. Hasari looks around at the clean, bustling school, at all the children in their crisp uniforms and a look of great yearning comes over his face.
INT. SMALL RESTAURANT - DAY

Max is trying to explain to the waiter what he wants.

    MAX
    Beef. You know -- cow? Minced, little salt, pepper, slap it flat like this, throw it on the grill, flip it.

Now, though, he just glimpses the shiny gas tank and engine of a motorcycle around the hip of the waiter. He leans out.

ANOTHER ANGLE

Ashoka, astride his motorcycle, GUNNING the ENGINE as a boy runs out of a store with an armload of cassettes.

WITH MAX AND WAITER

    MAX
    Put it on the grill, I'll be right back.

WITH ASHOKA

He pulls the boy's ear, REVS the ENGINE to go... and senses someone close. He turns to find an American hovering at his shoulder.

    MAX
    You know, I have to say you really don't look Jewish. I believe that's mine.

He reaches for the necklace with the Hebrew letter. Ashoka recognizes Max. Looks around for help. There is none.

    ASHOKA
    Don't touch me. No one touches me.

    MAX
    Really?

Max grabs Ashoka... who breaks free, and GUNS the CYCLE down a side street. Max gives chase, his aching ribs slowing him a bit.
SEVERAL CUTS

Ashoka, glancing back, begins to open up some distance. Yet, Max hangs tough, weaving like a broken field runner through the mass of bodies and vehicles. Now, suddenly, he loses Ashoka. He has to make a choice about this corner or that one. He chooses.

EXT. CITY OF JOY - AROUND CORNER - DAY (EARLY EVENING)

A COP steps into his path. He sees Ashoka up ahead. He's hopelessly out of breath.

MAX
Oh... great... good...good timing...him!

He can't talk and breathe. He points desperately. The Cop glances where Max points, but he makes no move to give chase.

COP
May I see your passport?

MAX
Passport? I'm in the middle of a high speed chase. That guy --

COP
Passport please.

A crowd has begun to form. In the distance, we see a group of girls carrying cricket equipment COMING AT us.

MAX
It's in my hotel room.

COP
Passport, please, now.

MAX
Ready my lips: I do not have my passport with me at this... (he gets it)
Ah, I see, said the blind man.

The Cop obviously is doing this at Ashoka's behest. Max starts around the Cop. The Cop, however, sticks his club in Max's face; there's fire in Max's eyes... but a hand takes the Cop's stick before Max can make a big mistake.
ANOTHER ANGLE - FAVORING OWNER OF HAND

The girls with the cricket equipment (and Margareta, the teacher). The hand belongs to Joan Bethel.

JOAN
Well, all right, junior, so you'll owe me three.

EXT. POST OFFICE - DAY

A scribe finishes writing a note home for Hasari. The scribe hands it to Hasari.

INSERT - NOTE AND MONEY ORDER

"We are well. Manooj does not go in the cinema. I am earning my living as a rickshaw wallah. It is my honor to send you this."

RESUME

With great pride, Hasari pays the scribe, seals the money order with the message in an envelope, licks the flap, and puts the envelope into the mail slot.

EXT. SQUARE (CITY OF JOY) - TEA SHOP - DAY (DUSK)

Surya plays his zither. Max and Joan sit at a table. Max pops little boiled candies into his mouth from a dish on the table.

JOAN
Oh, it was just a whim in the beginning really -- to try to convince them not to be so bloody passive, that they could pull themselves up on their own. I get a little money from a Swiss organization. Now it's become a bit more than I can manage.

MAX
It's got to be like trying to drill a hole in water, though.

JOAN
We just need a few more hands on this little life raft we've set afloat here.

(CONTINUED)
CONTINUED:

They stare at each other. Shambu has become one of Surya's tea boys and refills their tea.

JOAN
You know what I've come to think in my middle age, Max?

MAX
Nope, no, earthly idea. You're pretty much outta my league, thought-wise.

JOAN
There are really only three actions open to a person.

MAX
Only three -- okay. And what are they?

JOAN
To run, to spectate, to commit.

Max peers at her a moment, then around the square.

MAX
Has it occurred to you that this obsession with charity is really a flaw in your character?

JOAN
Charity! It's not charity, dear child, it's love. You're very badly twisted around, aren't you?

MAX
One of us sure as hell is.

The clinic's part-time doctor, SUNIL DASGUPTA, comes out of the clinic after a very long day.

SUNIL
I'm off for home, Sister Joan. A pleasure to meet you, Dr. Loeb.

MAX
The same.

SUNIL
See you day after tomorrow.

JOAN
Good night, God bless, Doctor.

(a beat)
Generous young man.

( CONTINUED )
CONTINUED:

As he watches Sunil head away, Max senses something coming at him from the side. A soccer ball almost hits him; he jumps up, handles the ball athletically.

SQUARE

He begins to play with Manooj and several other children. Shambu leaves his post in the tea shop to join them.

MANOOJ
Are you the American doctor? Are you coming here to help us.

MAX
No, I'm the visiting American soccer star, El Max.

MANOOJ
Do you go to the cinema in America, El Max?

MAX
When I was your age -- two movies, plus cartoons every Saturday.

Aloka and Amrita are cooking on an open fire bucket. Max almost knocks the fire over. Aloka looks at him, apologetic, shy... as Manooj knocks Shambu down at Max's feet. Max scoops the little boy up...

MAX
There you go, little guy. Ut -- what's this?

Reaching behind Shambu's ear, Max produces a boiled sweet. Aloka watches this with a smile; their eyes touch again... as Manooj lets out a cry at the sight of their father.

ANOTHER ANGLE

Ram and Hasari return home. Hasari can hardly walk. Shambu runs to his father, explaining excitedly...

SHAMBU
Daddy, there is the doctor from America. He saw two movies every Saturday. What's in your fist? Open, Daddy!

Shambu pries his father's fist open: seeds.

(CONTINUED)
CONTINUED:

SHAMBU
Seeds? Why?

HASARI
So we can watch something grow.

EXT. RAM'S HUNT NIGHT - UPSTAIRS

Children leaning down as smoke wafts up. We FOLLOW the smoke DOWN TO Max's cigar. Aloka and Amrita laying the food out. Shambu rubbing his father's aching legs as Hasari and Manooj plant the seeds in Hasari's little tea caddy full of earth from home. Max is watching this "family" huddled around the father.

RAM
Another few months, I'll be able to pay off the moneylender in my village and go home and open a grocery shop. All around me sacks overflowing with all kinds of dal and rice, aromatic spices, piles of vegetables... and at night, I'll lie on my back beneath the trees sniffing fresh aubergines.

This beautiful picture burrows into Hasari's mind. For a moment, he goes there -- home, to the village...

RAM
If my wife will let me come within a hundred miles of the place where she herself resides.

Ram laughs, Hasari smiles...

HASARI
Amrita, I saw a beautiful wedding sari today.

Amrita is terribly embarrassed.

RAM
It was six hundred rupees only.

He laughs at the impossibility of the price.

MAX
That's only 40 dollars, isn't it?

HASARI
If you have it.

(CONTINUED)
CONTINUED:

MAX
I'll send it to you from America when I get home tomorrow.

HASARI
That's very generous but no, thank you.

MAX
Repayment for punching you in the nose.

HASARI
You have repaid me by sharing our supper.

Joan indicates that Max should let it go. Hasari ever so carefully waters the tea box.

RAM
Doctor Big Brother, I myself would be willing to accept a gift. Could you give me five rupees in a note -- ten, perhaps. My ankle is badly swelled; the higher the number the more the swelling sinks.

Max has to laugh.

MAX
I don't have a cent on me. I'll owe you.

RAM
How much?

Now everyone's attentions is taken by a CRY from Shambu, who expels his breath, his terrified eyes directing our attention to...

ANOTHER ANGLE

It's an amazing sight. Two lepers: ANOUAR, bearded with a sharp intelligent, unmarked face, makes his way along on a small wheeled board, at an amazingly fast pace, ahead of SAID, a huge, mute leper. They stop some feet away. Lepers aren't often welcome. Out from behind Said steps Poomina.

POOMINA
Joan Di, my sister!

(CONTINUED)
CONTINUED:

She sees Max, gasps, throws herself behind Said. Joan looks at Max -- he starts to speak, she points a finger that silences him...

JOAN
It was Poomina who brought you to us. She has herself and her sister to support. It's all right, Poomina. Anouar, what is it?

She moves to them. They're all three badly out of breath.

WITH JOAN AND LEPERS

ANOUAR
It's Meeta! It's her time. But something is wrong. The midwives don't know what to do! Dr. Sunil, could he help, perhaps?

JOAN
Dr. Sunil isn't here.

POOMINA
Meeta will die.

ANOTHER ANGLE

Joan turns to Max, who hasn't heard the exchange.

JOAN
Max, I wouldn't ask, but it's an emergency. A pregnancy gone awry. It's a leper. Could you have a look?

Max is clearly thrown by the sight of the lepers.

MAX
I don't have any experience with leprosy.

JOAN
Good Christ, son, because she's a leper doesn't mean she's not built like a woman!

HASARI
I can run and get Dr. Sunil.

JOAN
It's too far.

(CONTINUED)
CONTINUED:

Suddenly, impulsively...

ALOKA
I could help. I've had three babies.

RAM
You can't do that. They're outcasts, they're unclean.

There are murmurs of assent from the others.

JOAN
Oh nonsense! It's not contagious!

A beat -- everyone fixed on Max.

HASARI
You're a doctor, how can you not help?

EXT. PATH-NIGHT

The moon reflects off the dark puddles of muddy water that line the side of the railway tracks. Anouar propels his board with astonishing agility along the path, Said and Poomina running with him. Max, Joan, carrying a first aid bag, Aloka and Hasari following, slipping and sliding on the rough ground with its puddles and sewage.

EXT. RAILWAY LINE - LEPER HUTS - NIGHT

The little procession arrives outside the three rough huts, made of bamboo, plastic sheeting, cloth, wood and cardboard. A few shadows materialize. Lepers -- staring silently.

Anouar points into a hut. Joan and Aloka precede Max inside. Max forgets to bend and bumps his head.

INT. HUT - NIGHT

The only light is the feeble waver from a candle. The blind Meeta lies on a rough mattress on the ground. Her ragged sari is pulled up to her middle. Her face runs with sweat, her hair is plastered to her face. A girl with black eyes is fanning her with a piece of wood. Meeta sends up a SOFT, uninterrupted MOAN. A wedge of blood-soaked cloth is between her legs.

(CONTINUED)
CONTINUED:

A middle-age leper is leaning over her -- a midwife, encouraging Meeta with a string of commands in their own language.

Max kneels, Aloka at his side. His breathing becomes shallow... but then he pulls off the blood-soaked bandages. Between Meeta's legs he can just make out the bottom of a foot. The child is breached. Maybe already dead.

ALOKA
Will she die?

Max goes into reflex actions. Joan has opened the first aid kit. There's a flashlight among the medicine, alcohol, compresses, scissors, etc. He hands the flashlight to Aloka as...

MAX
(to Joan)
Pull me two c.c.'s of Coramine.

He nods at Aloka; she illuminates the scene.

MAX
Uh-oh, uh-oh, who's this coming' down the lane? Why it's -- is it possible -- way over here, in India -- yes, it's Mr. Choke.

He comes to a stop. Everyone stares at him. Meeta moans. For a moment, he stays frozen. Aloka reaches out instinctively, wipes the sweat from his eyes. This gesture seems to free him; he looks at her, looks at the room and its expectant, trusting faces...

MAX
I'm going to have to turn it -- the baby. Tell her she has to relax these muscles as much as she can.

He doesn't finish the sentence. Aloka speaks softly to Meeta as Max takes Meeta's arm, makes a tourniquet. Joan hands him the syringe and he injects. Hands the syringe back to Joan and begins to work at turning the baby.

Aloka takes Meeta's hand and it's a moment before we realize Aloka, with her fine hand, is holding Meeta's fingerless palm.
OUTSIDE

A small group waits, trying to determine from the sounds what's happening inside. Anouar pours tea from a pot on the small fire, offers the cup to Hasari. Hasari stares at the cup, doesn't want to be impolite, but more than that, doesn't want to touch the cup. He shakes his head, smiles. Anouar drinks off the tea.

INSIDE

Sweat pours down Max's face into his eyes. He shakes it out. Aloka leans forward and, with her new sari, wipes the sweat away again. Max nods thanks.

MAX

Tell her again to breathe in short little bursts now.

He demonstrates. Aloka does the same to Meeta. Meeta tries to cooperate. And suddenly Max has the baby turned.

MAX

All right! Now, tell her to push.

Aloka translates. Meeta pushes. The midwife, the little girl, Aloka lean forward.

MAX

Again. Yes! Again. It's coming.

OUTSIDE

No one is sitting now. Everyone hangs close to the door. Only Hasari remains apart, seated on a tree stump in the middle of the quad. He coughs; suppresses it.

INSIDE

MAX

I've got the head. Come on, little baby, come on, little baby. Be alive, be alive, be alive.

Aloka wipes the sweat away again. He looks at her, his voice squeezed out through his teeth.

MAX

We've got it, we've got it. Yeah!

(CONTINUED)
CONTINUED:

He seems as released as Meeta. Then he gives a last gentle tug and a CRY squeezes out of the little piece of life in his hands. Max is fairly overwhelmed by the life in his hands. Poomina steps close, a smile on her lovely face, and touches the baby in Max's hands.

EXT. LANE - NIGHT

Max, Joan, Aloka and Hasari walk in silence down Nizamudhin Lane. There is only the mingled sound of COUGHING, MOANING, and a TRANSISTOR RADIO nearby playing a popular song. Outside the clinic, they stop. She takes his hand.

JOAN
For a non-practicing doctor, that was pretty practiced.

MAX
Never been so scared in my life.

It's a warm, open moment between them. But now there's the ongoing desperation of her needs.

JOAN
Max, please, won't you change your mind? We desperately need another doctor. Full-time. Think about it -- just give us a couple of months.

MAX
Can't do it. Maybe you've got it in you to be a saint. I just don't.

JOAN
Then what do you want? What are you going to be when you grow up? Good night, Aloka, Hasari.

Joan goes inside, leaving Max, Aloka, and a very uncomfortable Hasari alone a moment.

ALOKA
Thank you for allowing me to go with you.

MAX
You could make a helluva nurse.

A little smile comes over her face; no one's ever paid her that kind of compliment. She goes into Ram's hut, leaving Max and Hasari now.

(CONTINUED)
CONTINUED:

HASARI
I think perhaps you are a good man.

Hasari brings his hands together and goes inside.

EXT./INT. JOAN'S AND THE PAL'S (ALTERNATE) - NIGHT

Max hears Joan praying inside.

JOAN (O.S.)
Jesus, my brother, you who I am trying to believe are the light and salvation of the puking world...

THE PALS

Aloka sits huddled with her husband while their children sleep; they listen...

JOAN (O.S.)
Please see that we are living in madness and darkness here...

MAX

listens.

JOAN (O.S.)
... and we need help. Om, Jesus, om and amen.

Suddenly, he hurtles into motion. He runs down the alley, his stride stretching out, swallowing up the distance between here and the world beyond the City of Joy in great gulps.

EXT. CALCUTTA AIRPORT - ESTABLISHING - DAY

A busy, urban airport as opposed to the small country airport in which we saw Max earlier. V.O. we hear...

BETSY (V.O.)
Yes, yes, yes, that's right, yes!
I turned in your ticket!
INT. AIRPORT - DAY

It's a small place; it's sweltering, and it's packed with hundreds of families shoulder to shoulder. Though Betsy's trying to be discreet, it's not a very private place, as we see by the number of people watching Max and Betsy.

BETSY
I bought it, I got a refund!

MAX
But I want to go home with you.

BETSY
You want to go home with me?

MAX
Yes.

BETSY
Then prove it.

MAX
Good -- how -- name it.

BETSY
Buy yourself a ticket.

MAX
I would love to do that, Betsy Ilene, boy would I love to do just that, but I'm financially embarrassed at the --

BETSY
Use your credit cards.

MAX
What credit cards? You know I maxed them before we left. Just lend me --

BETSY
No! You won't pay me back; you never have. Oh, Max!

MAX
They're calling our flight. I want to go home with you, Betsy Ilene Kahn. Because I have a vision. It's...

He's trying to woo and charm her. He mimics a kind of house shape.

(CONTINUED)
CONTINUED:

MAX
I see you and me, Betsy Ilene
Kahn, nibbling toward each other
through a quarter pounder with
cheese, chugalugging a frosty
light beer -- great taste! Less
filling! Bowling! I want to go
bowling, Besty Ilene Kahn!

He fires a strike through the watching crowd.

MAX
I want... Oh, my Lord Amighty, I
want so many American things --

BETSY
Oh, stop it! You have no earthly
idea what you want, Max! And
stop calling me Betsy Ilene Kahn.

MAX
Isn't that your name?

BETSY
You call me Betsy Ilene Kahn like
you just met me yesterday.

MAX
What should I call you? My girl,
my significant other --

BETSY
Don't get cute! You get cute and
I swear to God --- you told me once
I look like my mother!

MAX
You do -- so what?

BETSY
See -- you don't understand!

MAX
How could I possibly not
understand a conversation as easy
as this one, Betsy Ilene.

BETSY
I hate you!

MAX
Na ya don't.
CONTINUED:

BETSY
I stood by you for three years!

MAX
I know.

BETSY
I supported you through your internship!

MAX
You did.

BETSY
Why? It was never working. What have I been thinking all these years -- that you'd change? You're the most self-pitying, self-destructive, self...

She can't find anything fierce enough, so she abates, tries to get it together to make a dignified exit.

BETSY
But you've taught me something, Max. You never finish anything. Well, I quit. I've found my light and I'm free of you.

She heads for the gate, people parting to give her a wide berth.

MOVING SHOT - TOWARD THE GATE

MAX
Will you at least call my mother and ask her to empty my savings account and wire --

BETSY
Do it yourself, Max. Call her collect. You should have called her weeks ago anyway just because she's your mother!

(to herself)
White light, white light...!

She hands her ticket and boarding pass over and she's through the gate. Max turns to find the audience fixed on him.

(CONTINUED)
CONTINUED:

MAX
Guerilla theater, folks. 'All the world's a stage.' Don't know if that word reached you here yet. If you'd care to show your appreciation by a small donation...

Many smiles... and several instant offers of rupees. A beat, then...

MAX
Aw, what the hell.

... Swallowing his incredible embarrassment, Max takes the money.

EXT. SQUARE - DAY (EARLY MORNING)

The line is long. At this moment, Joan is checking a child's throat with a tongue-depressor. Aloka is walking beside her with a fistful of depressors and a bag for disposal. Hasari and Ram are getting ready to leave. Anouar appears at Joan's waist.

ANOUAR
Good morning, Joan Di. Dr. Loeb said many of us could be helped; that all it would take is money for medication.

Anouar hands Joan some newspaper in which something is wrapped. Joan opens the paper. Inside is a good deal of money.

ANOUAR
Please buy the medication for us. If we cannot come here to receive it, perhaps Dr. Loeb would come to us.

JOAN
I'll be happy to buy the medication, but Dr. Loeb is not part of this endeavor, Anouar; there is only his cherished memory.

ANOUAR
Then perhaps I am having visions.

Anouar's focus is up the lane. Joan follows his focus to:
THEIR POV

Max approaches. A buzz about Max's heroics; hands coming together. Max raises a hand in benediction, makes the sign of the cross. Max claps Hasari on the shoulder; Hasari brings his hands together and gives Max a genuinely pleased smile. Children circle and touch him, Manooj and Shambu among them.

BACK TO SCENE

MAX
Good morning! Good morning! Heckuva morning! Getting ready to practice medicine without a license, Sister Joan? You don't see me soliciting conversions, do you?

JOAN
Well, well, well, I do so love to be surprised.

MAX
Okay, for starters, pick me out someone with something easy I can heal, make me look good.
(to Aloka)
Aloka, you're my assistant, let's go.

Aloka smiles, she nods, she accepts.

JOAN
Max, knock it off, give us a bit of hush.
(as he does)
What happened?

MAX
I changed my mind.

JOAN
And I'm a bloody bathing beauty.

MAX
Okay, so I got left.

JOAN
Smart girl... So how long am I stuck with you?

MAX
Two weeks -- or until Mom sends me a ticket.

(CONTINUED)
CONTINUED:

JOAN
Not worth the aggravation of your prattle every day. Six months -- and not a day less.

MAX
No way. Six weeks -- and that's my best offer.

JOAN
Two months -- and that's my final offer.

MAX
(a beat)
Done.

JOAN
Jesus and Mary. The Lone Ranger rides again.

And now smiles creep onto all their faces as Max goes inside, followed by Joan... and then Aloka -- after she looks at Hasari, gets his nod of encouragement. Too late, Joan says...

JOAN
Watch your --

Thud!

MAX
Thanks -- got it.

The children titter. The teacher, Margareta, admonishes them to pay attention and be polite... as we --

FADE OUT.

FADE IN:

EXT. SCHOOL GIRL'S HOUSE - HASARI'S WHEELS - DAY (TWO WEEKS LATER)

The wheels spinning furiously and then stopping abruptly.

Hasari, dripping with sweat, panting. The School Girl comes running toward him. After her, in the b.g., her MOTHER.

SCHOOL GIRL
Hasari, where have you been? I've been waiting almost five minutes.

(CONTINUED)
CONTINUED:

HASARI
I'm sorry, forgive me. It won't happen again.

SCHOOL GIRL
We're not going to school today. You're taking my mother and me to the Bara Bazar. I'm getting married!

HASARI
Oh, I am so pleased for you!

Panting helplessly, Hasari smiles... as he helps the School Girl's Mother into the rickshaw.

MOTHER
Good morning, Hasari.

HASARI
Good morning, missus.

Briskly, he takes up the shafts and sets off.

MOTHER
Turn right at that corner, Hasari.

HASARI
It's farther that way, missus.

MOTHER
No, not really. Turn there, please.

Obediently, Hasari turns (as Ramatullah, heading the other way, passes; they wave) and Hasari pulls AWAY FROM us.

EXT. SECOND WEDDING SHOP - DAY

He helps them out of the rickshaw in front of an expensive-looking bridal shop.

SCHOOL GIRL
You must remember this shop, Hasari, when it's your daughter's time. This is the nicest in the city.

The Mother gives the School Girl a withering look and hustles her into the shop. Hasari can just barely hear...

(CONTINUED)
MOTHER (O.S.)
Don't say things like that. He's never going to be able to buy anything here.

ON HASARI

He watches from outside, a look of determination coming over his face. Suddenly a pair of fingers takes hold of his ear, twisting his face painfully.

ANOTHER ANGLE

Ashoka, with The Goonda and two henchmen, in the b.g.

ASHOKA
Not working? How will my father eat this evening?

HASARI
I was just...

ASHOKA
You have a daughter?

HASARI
Yes, Babu.

MARWARI (O.S.)
Rickshaw wallah!

Called to work, Hasari starts for his rickshaw, but Ashoka hangs on to his ear for another uncomfortable moment... as he slips a rupee into Hasari's shirt pocket.

ASHOKA
Keep working. Give this to Sister Joan and your friend the doctor when you go home.

Now he hands Hasari a sealed envelope and turns his ear loose. Hasari springs toward his passenger.

INT. EXAMINING ROOM - DAY

Max with his stethoscope to Meeta's baby. Meeta in a brightly-colored sari and a lot of bracelets and Aloka looks on. Poomina clings to the wall.

(CONTINUED)
CONTINUED:

MAX
He's just malnourished. Is she giving him the milk we gave her or selling it?

Aloka asks Meeta in Hindi. Meeta clearly swears she's giving the baby the milk. Aloka pushes her.

ALOKA
Not all. Most.

MAX
Tell her to give all the milk to the baby.

Aloka does so as Max bounces the baby, coos to it playfully. The baby pees all over him. Aloka translates quickly. Meeta starts apologizing. Poomina can't help laughing. Max reminds Meeta that that's once for each of the two weeks of the baby's life. Aloka soothes Meeta as she hustles her, Poomina, and the baby out, then quickly begins to wipe Max's face with a clean rag. This isn't something she's accustomed to doing, but she's doing it before she has time to think. Max finds himself conscious of her closeness to him... and then she becomes suddenly self-conscious and she backs off, ducks her head. He peeks up under.

MAX
Psst.

She looks at him.

MAX
It's okay.

He smiles. So does she.

EXT. SQUARE - DAY (EARLY EVENING)

Sunil stands outside the clinic, rolling his sleeves down. Anouar waits at a polite distance. Exhausted but exhilarated, Max and Aloka emerge with an elderly woman patient, Max singing Chuck Berry to the woman's embarrassed delight: "They're really rockin' in Boston, in Philadelphia, P.A..." Sunil looks at his American colleague, smiles a small smile.

SUNIL
Good night, I'll see you day after tomorrow.

MAX
Good night, Sunil.

(CONTINUED)
"... Deep in the heart of Texas, around the Frisco Bay..." Manooj and Shambu come charging at Max with the soccer ball, hoping to engage him as a playmate. Hasari returns home with his rickshaw.

Selima waves at Max, indicates she's cooking dinner. Joan wanders out of the school as the kids are released and go charging through the square. Joan has the Pal kids in hand.

**SELIMA**

Very special supper for you tonight, Doctor Big Brother! Will you stay?

**MAX**

Wish I could, Selima, because I'm sure hungry! Sixteen hours of pestilence and misery always make me famished. I have to go with my man Anouar tonight. I've got lepers to heal!

**ANOUAR**

No, no, you know how patient we are. Eat, eat.

**MAX**

(to Aloka)

You're not tired, are you?

**ALOKA**

Not if you're not.

Between Hasari and Aloka, there's just a flicker of tension; evidently, this has become Max's (and her) normal day. But he's also worried about the note from Ashoka. Joan joins them with the Pal children.

**JOAN**

Well, I think we've got three very good potential scholars here.

Behind the children's backs, she points at Manooj and indicates the kid's really got a head.

**JOAN**

Given him some time here, he'll be good enough for a proper school.

**HASARI**

It's more than a father could hope.

(Continued)
CONTINUED:

MAX
Fifteen years from now: Miami, Florida, Dr. Manooj Pal, in association with Dr. Maxwell Loeb.

For a moment, Hasari is swept up in this little reverie, then remembers reality.

HASARI
(giving her the note)
From the godfather's son. For you and the doctor.

Amidst instant concern, Joan opens the envelope. Looks at Max. We hear the sound of BANGLADESH MUSIC.

INT. GODFATHER'S "THRONE ROOM" - OLD RADIO - DAY

The MUSIC is of days gone by, playing on an old RADIO. Sticks of burning incense send off trails of smoke. The godfather, MR. GHATAK, Looking infirm, wipes a tear from his eye.

GHATAK
Acha!

Now we see Max and Joan seated on cushions before the godfather, tea in hand. Max catches a glimpse in an anteroom of several thugs with several young girls, one of whom is Poomina. She catches a glimpse of Max as she disappears past a door. A moment later, her head peeks around the door frame. She brings her hands together.

ASHOKA (O.S.)
You!

Poomina quickly disappears. Max's attention is pulled back to the godfather...

GHATAK
I understand that you're interested in expanding your clinic and free school, and that you intend to start treating lepers in the City of Joy.

JOAN
We'd like to better serve the entire community, Mr. Ghatak.

(CONTINUED)
CONTINUED:

GHATAK
Of course. That's very good. Admirable. And we'd be pleased to rent you suitable space. But you must understand that certain payments will go up.

JOAN
I understand the rent would have to go up if we rent larger quarters from you, Mr. Ghatak, but why should we have to pay more protection?

GHATAK
More people, more potential trouble. Strangers. If I don't charge you, what will I tell others?

JOAN
But we can't afford it!

GHATAK
Surely if you can expand, you can pay more.

Joan throws up her hands -- how do you reason with this man?

MAX
Am I stupid, but isn't this protection money money we're paying you to protect us from you?

GHATAK
We live in chaotic times, Miss Bethel, Doctor. I control the City of Joy and maintain it as a model of harmony. It's a miracle, but a very fragile miracle.

MAX
And how are we threatening your miracle?

GHATAK
I admire your courage in choosing to work in such a violent place, Miss Bethel.

(MORE)
CONTINUED:

GHATAK (CONT'D)
Your neighbors in the City of Joy, they're not educated, they're given to violence, to meanness, I can promise you they won't like having lepers among them, but because they know you're under my protection...

He dispatches a globule of spit into the copper urn next to his right toe... and tries to get to his feet. The Goonda hurries forward to help him.

GHATAK
Doctor, do you like our music?

MAX
Well, I can't say I've developed a craving for it yet.

GHATAK
It's difficult to appreciate what we don't understand, isn't it? Let me put it another way: The world is a terrible place. Only the ruthless prevail. My son will make the arrangements with you.

One of the thugs helps the godfather outside, where, in the b.g., we see him listening to his music and pottering in his garden. As Max and Joan turn, Max finds himself face to face with Ashoka, who wears Max's necklace and chai. There's a long pause as the two of them take the other's measure.

MAX
(to Ashoka)
I like your taste in neckwear.

Joan puts a cautioning hand on Max's arm. Ashoka seems just the slight bit uneasy dealing with Max and so keeps trying to direct himself to Joan. He smokes a long Indian cigarette.

ASHOKA
The entire package we're proposing will cost you three thousand rupees a month.

Joan is taken aback by the sum.

JOAN
If we pay you that, we won't have any money for supplies.

(CONTINUED)
CONTINUED:

ASHOKA
I'm told you're very resourceful.

MAX
I think I see a solution. May I?
What if we were to work out a
profit-sharing arrangement? We
give you a share of our net profit.

ASHOKA
How do you expect to make a profit
off of lepers and the poor, Doctor?

MAX
Beats the hell outta me, asshole.
But you've obviously found a way.

The question would seem to be whether Ashoka will have
Max killed here or outside the house. His eyes on Max,
Ashoka puts the cigarette out against the back of his
hand... and smiles at Max.

EXT. GODFATHER'S HOUSE - DAY

Joan is furious.

JOAN
Have you gone right off your
rocker!? These people don't have
a sense of humor. Are you trying
to get yourself killed?

MAX
I don't think so... but with me,
any duplicity is possible.

He tickles her; she knocks his hands away; he tickles her
again.

JOAN
Stop it, you... you... you nudnick!

He doesn't stop, and as she storms off down the street,
he stays right on her, tickling away.

INT. METAL PIECEWORK SHOP - DAY

It's dark and claustrophobic. The air vibrates with the
SQUEAL and CLATTER of METAL. About twenty kids sit in a
line, back to back, manipulating a series of lethal and
unprotected lathes and polishers. No one can hear his
neighbor.
ANOTHER ANGLE

Hasari, with Shambu in the rickshaw, arrives to take the children home. As he looks inside, he notices...

HASARI'S POV

Not far from Amrita sits a handsome boy (Subash). He catches Amrita's eyes. Amrita is sweetly embarrassed to find her father staring at her.

ON HASARI

But he can't help but smile. At the same time he's reminded moment to moment of his various obligations.

EXT. SIDE STREET - DAY

The three kids in the rickshaw. An ambassador car swerves in front of Hasari, forcing him to jam to a stop, jolting the kids. The Goonda sits in the back seat with Ashoka, who carves his fingernails with a switchblade knife. He crooks a finger at Hasari. Hasari leans close and Ashoka takes him by the ear.

ASHOKA
Who gave you your rickshaw?

HASARI
The Godfather.

ASHOKA
Who provides the food you eat?

HASARI
The Godfather.

ASHOKA
Remember: Loyalty.

He gives Hasari's ear a last tug... and the car continues on, leaving Hasari. He looks at his children, ashamed to have been cowed. Manooj fixes his father with a hard look.

EXT. JOAN'S ROOM - KIDS - ABOVE - NIGHT

Leaning over, listening, taking in the aroma of...
INT. JOAN'S ROOM

Max's cigar. He sits slightly apart from Joan, Sunil, Aloka, Ram, Hasari, Selima, Margareta, Surya, SALADDIN, ASHISH and Shanta, Aristotle John, MEHBOUB, Anouar, and Said.

Hasari is stretched out, Aloka rubbing his screaming legs. Throughout the following, their eyes meet and deflect...

SALADDIN
The Godfather is at least civilized. The son is vicious. Remember the last elections -- the Molotov coctails, the blows with iron bars. They'll throw us out. We won't be able to find anyone else to rent to us. We'll just have to agree to pay what he wants.

MEHBOUB
Saladdin's right. Neither nature nor the people with the power have any conscience. We have to pay.

A sigh escapes Surya. He shakes his head. Eyes flick at him.

ASHISH
What do you say, Doctor Big Brother?

SUNIL
I think we must try to break the Godfather's hold on us.

This is startling and is met with a babble of cautious agreement and dispute.

SUNIL
Please, hear me out. But I think we have to be very cautious.

MAX
How the hell do you proceed with caution against these people? You can't. You have to risk everything.

(MORE)
CONTINUED:

    MAX (CONT'D)
    You try to negotiate with these people, you make compromises with them, they'll eat you alive. Stand up against them now and they'll fold. I guarantee it. Underneath, they're cowards, they got no guts. We show them we're strong and the'll just move on to easier pickings.

    ASHISH
    We? You have an airplane ticket.

Still, he's clearly piqued a lot of support.

    SUNIL
    You know, Max, this is not American gangster television.

    SALADDIN
    Yes, if you're wrong, you don't have to be here.

    MAX
    I'm not wrong. You bow your heads, you plead with your Gods to do what you won't do yourselves. You put up with this nightmare as if there were no choice. I'm telling you, if you don't stand up to that little pimple face now, he'll own you for the rest of your lives.

Everyone stares at him. Many of them want to buy his commitment. There's another large sigh from Surya. Aloka and Hasari's eyes bang off of each other, she silently urging him to speak. He's deeply conflicted and deeply frightened.

    ANOUAR
    Even though I am invisible to some of you and I don't have a complete set of legs to stand on, I stand with the Doctor Big Brother. Maybe nature doesn't have a conscience or those with the power, but don't we?

    Said, the giant mute, makes an unintelligible sound in his throat, but clearly he's agreeing with Anouar.

    (CONTINUED)
CONTINUED:

MARGARETA
I agree with Anouar and Max Daddah.
I think it's worth the chance.

Silence... until Aloka and Hasari's meet again and, out of his terrible fear and conflict, he says very shyly...

HASARI
Is it permitted to speak?

There are quick nods around the room. With great difficulty, Hasari says his piece.

HASARI
I want my children to be educated and cared for; this is our home, we have never had such friends. But many of us owe a great debt to the Godfather. He is strong and could kill us... But we must choose. I trust my Big Brother. I say we must stand up.

There's still dissension, but somewhat more support. Said makes a fierce, unintelligible supportive sound. Surya sighs again. Eyes flick at the old man.

SUNIL
Sister Joan, what do you think, really?

JOAN
Well, I think Max has hit on the heart of what we're trying to build here: a self-help society. Each of us has to decide for himself. As for me, I suppose I think, really, that if the bastards are going to suck us dry, I'd like to get in a couple of good left-handers before I turn the other cheek.

SALLADIN
But who will rent to us!

Surya clucks his tongue and shakes his head; everyone assumes he is preparing a heated refutation of the resisters. His sighs, though, have been a building commitment.

(CONTINUED)
CONTINUED:

SURYA
I have a property I will rent you
for two hundred rupees a month,
and not a rupee less. As for
protection... you are on your own.

Many of the faces are uncertain -- Hasari's notable among them.

MONTAGE - INT./EXT. COWSHEDS - DAY

A) Two cows are shooed out of the ramshackle building as
bustling activity on the new clinic begins. Cleaning
the place. Debris being torn out, hurled into a
pile in the street.

B) Said, with the strength of three men, holds up a heavy
beam while Hasari tries to secure it. Max, hot,
smelly, and hating the place, stands in the middle of
the room, wishing he were elsewhere. The beams starts
to slip. Max leaps to Hasari's side.

C) We see that Max and Hasari are thrown together again
in some carpentering task in uneasy camaraderie. A
finger pokes Max on the back. He turns to find
Poomina holding out two cups of tea.

D) The whole group shares a meal, prepared under the
direction of Selima, though the lepers remain separate
from the normals. Anouar leads the lepers in singing
a song. Joan and Margareta pick it up, as do several
other of the normals.

E) Equipment from the old school/clinic being moved from
the square down here.

F) Max and Aloka do one of those dances where two people
with arms loaded try to go around each other. Finally
he says he'll stand still and she should go around
him. They both laugh. Hasari watches.

G) As Max puts medicine into a cabinet, Ram peeks in,
nods his approval, "helpfully" passes Max something
Max can reach just fine himself, shows Max an enormous
hole in his shorts and hits Max for ten rupees.

H) A small truck carrying a charitable organization's
logo on the side is being unloaded of powdered milk
and various other things.

(CONTINUED)
CONTINUED:

I) UPSTAIRS AND STAIRWELL

Hasari and Max move the last cot upstairs and into place beside a window that will come into play at the end (It looks down on the street). Hasari nods to Max, indicating he should look.

J) THEIR POV

Everyone gathered as Shanta and Ashish put a banner above the door: "You are invited to the festival of this world and your life is blessed." The assemblage applauds and embraces.

K) UPSTAIRS

Hasari smiles at Max, brings his hands together, but doesn't embrace the doctor.

EXT. CLINIC - NIGHT

Everyone lingers, adults and children. Max plays his trumpet, accompanying Surya on his zither. Manooj hovers over Max.

MANOOJ
Doctor Big Brother, aren't you going to smoke your evening cigar?

Max points at his trumpet, continues playing.

MANOOJ
Please.

Max indicates his pocket. Manooj takes out a cigar and a clip. Clips the cigar, holds it out to Max, who indicates Manooj should light it, and keeps playing. Manooj looks at Hasari, who nods. Shambu holds a match to it. Everyone watches as if this were a major event. Manooj takes a puff, chokes, offers the cigar to Mehboub, who takes it, puffs, passes it. Everyone relaxes, enjoys the peacefulness of the smoking and the aroma wafting upward. Ram taps at Max's elbow.

RAM
It has come to me tonight to write a letter to my wife.

Ram produces a mangled one piece letter -- envelope.

RAM
Please.

(CONTINUED)
CONTINUED:

He thrusts the paper at Max. Max takes a pen from his pocket.

MAX
Okay -- shott.

RAM
Yes -- what is the word -- that word -- when land is watered... with canals?

MAX
"Irrigation"?

RAM
Yes, yes, that word, I want that word in the letter.

Max looks at him, nods, waits. Ram stares at Max; waits.

MAX
Well?

RAM
Well?

MAX
What would you like to say to your wife?

RAM
I don't know, Max Daddah. If I knew what to say to my wife, I'd never have left home.

Everybody laughs, though Ram's remark hits Max on a deeper level. Manooj slides in beside him.

MANOOJ
Why do you have to go home, Doctor Babu?

ALOKA
Because he doesn't live here, Manooj. This is not his home.

A look between Max and Aloka; Hasari's eyes flicking at both of them... as Aloka's eyes come to Hasari. The cigar reaches Ram. As Max starts to write, Ram takes a large puff and blows a huge ring out of his mouth. We FOLLOW it.
ABOVE

A whole row of faces on rooftops enjoying the cigar.
This as we:

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. GREEN ACRES – THROUGH RICKSHAW WHEELS – DAY

THROUGH the WHEELS we see Max come briskly out of the hotel carrying his doctor's bag. He's met by the sight of Hasari between the shafts of his rickshaw and Anouar and Meeta perched on the seat.

MAX
On no! Lepers! Lepers in my neighborhood!

ANOUAR
Sshh! Doctor Big Brother, please, we are pretending not to be lepers.

MAX
Oh, oh, I didn't get the concept -- of course, not lepers. I think you're going to fool a lot of people. I have only one question: Why are you here?

ANOUAR
We've come to take you to the dispensary in grand style on this special day, haven't we, Hasari?

HASARI
Yes.

MAX
Na, I'll just trot alongside Hasari.

HASARI
No, please, get in.

Max climbs into the rickshaw beside the two lepers and Hasari pulls away.

ANOUAR
Meeta's very excited by this ride through Calcutta. You see, she's never been sightseeing before.

Meeta, of course, is blind. Max, Hasari, Anouar laugh.

MAX
You're incorrigible, Anouar.

(CONTINUED)
CONTINUED:

ANOUAR
Yes, yes, I know, thank you very much.

As the rickshaw disappears into the sea of people and vehicles, we hear Anouar and Max LAUGHING.

EXT. SIDE STREET - DAY

Margareta, Manooj, Shambu, Shoba, several other kids and, at the end of the line, Poomina, all carrying water on their heads toward the City of Joy. Suddenly, someone whispers to Poomina. One of Ashoka's thugs. She glances after Margareta and the other kids who are turning a corner and steps into:

ALLEYWAY

Where Ashoka waits.

ASHOKA
You taking that to the clinic?
(as she nods)
You like it there?
(as she nods)
And they love your smile, don't they?

She's fearful now and doesn't respond. He grabs her, the water pitcher crashes to the ground, he puts his knife into her mouth and lays her face open on both side with his knife.

EXT. CITY OF JOY - DAY

Aloka comes TOWARD us leading a group of lepers. And stops. Her hand goes to her mouth.

THEIR POV - CLINIC - FROM DISTANCE

Two hundred normal people lined up outside the gaily be-decked dispensary -- many mothers with small children in their arms. Shanta sees Aloka, gestures to indicate the incredible turn-out. The normals at the end of the line turn to look at the approaching LEPERS.

LEPER WOMAN
It is too beautiful to believe.

(CONTINUED)
As if indeed she were right, their path is suddenly cut off by the Goonda and a commando of thugs, armed with sticks and iron bars, backed up by a group carrying banners with slogans proclaiming in Hindi, Urdu, English: "We Don't Want Lepers Here!" There's a sudden uneasy silence. Behind the thugs a short distance is the policeman who harassed Max earlier and another cop. Joan hurries forward.

**GOONDA**
Good morning, Sister to the poor.

**JOAN**
Yes, Mr. Bhose?

**GOONDA**
Those people aren't coming into this neighborhood.

**JOAN**
They are going to be treated at the dispensary. You have no right to stop them.

**ANOTHER ANGLE**

Hasari arrives with Max, Anouar, and Meeta.

**JOAN**
Go ahead, Aloka, take them inside.

The Goonda puts his hand on Aloka. The policeman in the b.g. keep their distance.

**JOAN**
Take your hands off her, you waster!

Joan is seized by a sudden fury and grabs the Goonda. He grabs her much harder. Said growls and pushes forward. Several thugs turn, step in to neutralize him. Joan elbows the Goonda and tries to wrestle free of him. As a reflex he raises his hand. And as he does, it's seized.

**ANOTHER ANGLE**

Max (with Hasari in the b.g., confused, conflicted). Max slings the Goonda against the side of a truck.

**GOONDA**
That was a mistake, Doctor.

(CONTINUED)
CONTINUED:

MAX
The mistake's yours, putz.
(to Aloka)
Get these people inside.

Aloka starts forward, leading the lepers. She's stopped by a sudden blow from the Goonda's stick across her shoulders, knocking her to the ground, bleeding from the neck.

Hasari bolts for his wife, gets caught up in the melee.

Max swings around on the Goonda and for the first time we realize how strong he is, and that he knows how to box. The Goonda goes down and violence erupts. Anouar is chopping at the legs of one of the thugs working on Said. The massive Said tears free and starts to beat the crap out of the two thugs holding him.

The noise brings everyone out of the square, those lined up at the clinic, the children from the school.

Sunil comes flying out of the clinic.

A stampede of those waiting outside the dispensary and those normally in the crowded alley ensues. Shanta runs inside for help. Shopkeepers barricade their shop windows.

One of the thugs pours gasoline over Anouar and lights a match. Hasari kneels beside Aloka when he sees the match ignite the tiny leper. Without thinking, Hasari hurls himself on top of Anouar, rolling him in the dirt and against his own body to put out the flames.

Joan shouts, demanding the violence stop. She's hit from behind; she decides talk isn't going to do it. She grabs a piece of lumber and starts to fight.

ANGLE ON DISPENSARY

An EXPLOSION in the doorway, scattering anyone who remains in the area of the dispensary doorway, badly wounding Mehboub.

More people with sticks. Hasari goes down under several bodies. Max reaches Aloka, helps her up, sends her toward the clinic. He tears an attacker off of Hasari and they fight back to back a moment. A SECOND EXPLOSION near them... and through the smoke Max sees...
ANOTHER ANGLE

Ashoka astride his motorcycle, behind his dark glasses, with more thugs, these with Molotov cocktails and pickaxes, ready to raze the clinic and school and the surrounding neighborhood.

Sunil drags Mehboub inside.

People chant: "White Monkeys, go home! White Monkeys, go home! No lepers here! No lepers here!" The thugs cock their iron bars and bricks and Molotov cocktails. Max picks up an iron bar of his own and starts for Ashoka. Suddenly, there's a DETONATION followed by a BLAST of air so fierce, Max is thrown to the ground. A bottle of GASOLINE has EXPLODED just behind him. He's enveloped in smoke.

An assailant bears down on Joan with a cutlass. As the assailant is about to strike, Hasari seizes the attacker and hurls him backward. Ashish steps in and slashes the assailant with his own weapon, startling, even repelling Hasari.

From all over the lane, young fighters have come and joined the fray, not bothering to choose sides but merely enjoying the release. Hasari lunges for a woman under attack by a boy, arriving too late to stop the boy from plunging his knife into the woman's belly. Hasari fights his way to the woman, but she staggers into the mob.

Max knocks down one of the thugs only to have another hand grasp his shoulder. He turns, fist cocked to find Poomina, her hands holding her face together. Slowly, she takes hands away. The sides of her face have been laid open. Max sweeps her up in his arms, heads for the clinic.

MAX
Oh, little girl, little girl...

Joan is suddenly beside Ashoka.

JOAN
We'll pay! All right then, so by all means, protect us!

Ashoka raises a hand, The Goonda blows a whistle, and the fighting stops as suddenly as it began. The combatants are breathing heavily. There is silence but for the groans and cries of the wounded and grieving.

ASHOKA
In a world such as ours, everyone needs protection. For the fee we discussed, from this day forward, I can assure you nothing like this will happen again.

(CONTINUED)
CONTINUED:

A beat... Saladdin is at Joan's shoulder. Ashoka points a finger at Hasari.

ASHOKA
You. I warned you about the company you keep.

He REVS his MOTORCYCLE and SCREECHES away, leaving Hasari staring after him in his dust.

INT. COURTYARD - DAY

People peer in through every opening. Mehboub's chest is bandaged. Sunil squeezes through the packed courtyard and hallway, Ashish carrying a wounded woman behind him. Hasari steps into a doorway, us WITH him.

INT. EXAMINING ROOM - MAX, ALOKA, POOMINA

Max, blood crusted on her face, sutures Poomina's awful facial wound as Aloka prepares a compress.

ALOKA
Will she... Her face, will it...

MAX
If she's very careful and doesn't do anything to open the wound, the scarring will be minimal.
(to Poomina)
Do you understand? You can't... You have to stay here.
(to Joan)
You make her stay here.

JOAN
I'll try.

MAX
Don't goddamn try, Joan! Goddamn do it!

Poomina peers through her pain at Max, his hands putting her back together.

MAX
(a litany)
I hate this place, I hate this place, I hate this place.

Max looks at the doorway and he locks eyes with Hasari. Max breaks the contact. Hasari stares at him as we hear the godfather's MUSIC on the RADIO.
EXT. GODFATHER'S COURTYARD - HAND AND PENCIL - DAY

A hand tap, tap, taps against a ledger.

COURTYARD

Ashoka sits behind a little table, picking absently at his face. The Goonda is slouched near the table, smoking a cigarette and fiddling with a thin switch. (It's difficult for him to show Ashoka the respect his inherited position gives him.) The Goonda has a bruise under one eye from his altercation in the City of Joy yesterday. The air is filled with the MUFFLED SOUNDS OF the STREET. FROM here, we can see the evermore enfeebled godfather in his "throne room," wrapped in a cashmere, listening to the radio. Ashoka looks up, stares impassively at someone.

ASHOKA
Well. What have you got to say?

ANOTHER ANGLE

For the first time, we see who Ashoka's speaking to.

HASARI
I told them that your father provides us with a great deal and --

Ashoka slams his hand on the register.

ASHOKA
From this minute, you are off the list! You will leave your rickshaw here... where it will be reserved for a man who deserves our trust.

He stands up. Hasari is near tears.

HASARI
Please, Babu, this is as if the ground has opened up. I have to speak to Mr. Ghatak!

Hasari starts for the house. The Goonda stops him and, quickly, has Hasari on his knees, his arm twisted painfully behind his back. Ashoka jumps at Hasari, grabs his ear.

ASHOKA
My father's ill! You are speaking to me!

(CONTINUED)
CONTINUED:

HASARI
I have a family!

ASHOKA
The decision is made. I have made it. Now get out before I have Mr. Bhose break your legs.

He gives Hasari's ear a vicious twist and slams his head against the table.

EXT. GODFATHER'S HOUSE - DAY

The side gate opens and Hasari is shoved out. Stumbling, he runs to the fence, peers through. Two men are pulling his rickshaw into the courtyard. Hasari watches as a steel shutter is pulled down, cutting his livelihood from sight.

ANGLE THROUGH BAR - HASARI

Numb, compromised, defeated. Perhaps the low point of his life.

INT. CLINIC - JOAN'S ROOM - "RAFT OF MEDUSA" - NIGHT

Flickering candlelight illuminates the "Raft of Medusa." Max rails at Joan.

MAX
I just don't... I don't want to... I don't want to care! I don't want to care this much! I just don't want to be invested in you people. In people! I became a goddamn doctor because my goddamn father wanted me to be a goddamn doctor because he was a goddamn doctor! He was the goddamn king of doctors! It's too goddamn hard!

Out of breath, out of words, Joan reaches out and takes Max to her, brings him beside her on the cot. Beneath the "Raft of Medusa," she sits with an arm around Max, as if he were her son.

JOAN
Not everyone's cut out for this. You did the best you could. Better than many. It's all right.

(CONTINUED)
CONTINUED:

MAX
I didn't do the best I could! I did what I always do! I shot my big mouth off and did a half-assed job. And what I want to do now is I want to go back to America and make money and live a life without entanglements and demands and people hanging on me.

JOAN
(a beat)
You know, the fact is from the minute we're born we're shipwrecked. Some see that as a lifetime of drowning, of fear, others only to endure, but to triumph. It's all in the individual spirit, isn't it?

MAX
Got it: To run, to spectate, to commit.
(raises his hand)
Running spectator.

JOAN
Then, by all means, go home, Max, and go with my blessing and my eternal friendship.

The candlelight flickers against them as they sit side by side. Neither speaks.

EXT. RAM'S HUT - TEA SHOP - NIGHT

At the tea shop, a group relive the day's events. The children sleep. Aloka sits outside, worried about Hasari.

Max comes out, meets Aloka's eyes and looks away. She's heard the conversation.

Hasari, drunk, comes down the slope. Face to face with Max.

HASARI
They took away my rickshaw.

Aloka's hand flies to her mouth. Hasari peers at Max with his drunken gaze. It's a terrible moment for Max, but...

(CONTINUED)
CONTINUED:

MAX
So what do you want me to do about it -- get it back for you?

Max takes away a step. Stops.

MAX
I'm sorry. I'm going home.
Because this isn't my fight. I got one person to look after --
me.

Hasari stares at Max. On the roof, the children listen. At the tea shop, the late-night talkers listen.

MAX
All right, I'm running out, okay?
Because I'm a coward, this is me,
this is what I do, I get in over
my head, I let people down, I run.

HASARI
But I trusted you.

MAX
Well, that was your goddamn mistake!

Max walks away, leaving Hasari desolate. Aloka comes to him.

HASARI
I don't know how I'm going to pay the rent, how we're going to eat.

ALOKA
We have what is saved for Amrita's dowry.

The thought of using the dowry is yet another awful blow to Hasari's hopes.

HASARI
The children must leave the school; they'll have to work. And you will not have anything to do with the clinic or those people anymore.

Ram joins them.

RAM
What I earn is yours, too.

(CONTINUED)
CONTINUED:

HASARI
You can't support all of us. You
have a family in your village, too.

Hasari touches his friend and goes into:

INT. RAM'S HUT

Alone in his pain, he spots his tea caddy in which he planted his seeds over a month ago. He bends over to tenderly touch the growing shoot and water the earth. He looks up and the three children are staring at him. What will their father do now to keep them alive?

INT. BLOOD DISPENSARY - CLOSE ON HASARI'S ARM - DAY

The needle injected, Hasari's blood flowing into a bottle.

ANOTHER ANGLE

Hasari seated on the stool, watching his blood leave his body, his face again broken out in perspiration.

HIS POV - RAFIK

Waiting.

BACK TO SCENE - HASARI

His face immobile, his thoughts distant. The Attendant starts to pull the needle out. Hasari stops his hand.

HASARI
Take more.

The Attendant shakes his head.

HASARI
Take more.

The Attendant looks at Rafik, who shrugs, nods... and allows the blood to flow on out of Hasari's body.

EXT. BLOOD BANK - DAY

Barely ambulatory, Hasari starts down the street, but has to stop, lean against a wall. Through his woozy haze, he thinks he sees an apparition.
ANOTHER ANGLE

There, in the entrance to a building, is Gangooly. Seeing a potential victim, he swoops in.

**GANGOOLY**
Not well, brother?

**HASARI**
Still stealing from refugees?

Gangooly looks at Hasari, recognizes him, and gives him an amazing smile.

**GANGOOLY**
Well, yes, I remember you, of course -- hello! I am delighted to see you -- yes. And tell me immediately, please -- your little family, your beautiful children, everyone eats, yes. Come, have a cup of tea or a little something stronger, we must celebrate.

Gangooly starts to move, to position himself for a get-away. Hasari blocks his egress, unsmiling.

**GANGOOLY**
Ah, well, you're angry at me, yes, I wondered if that was still on your mind -- I am full of regret about that, yes, even a little tormented. What can I say? I have the spirit of an eagle trapped in the body of a crow.

**HASARI**
I'm touched.

**GANGOOLY**
My friend, I am lame and I am poor. Does that mean that I shouldn't survive? Huh? When a man is struggling in a rough sea, he clutches onto what he can or he drowns. You don't look so well.

**HASARI**
I lost my rickshaw.

Gangooly gives Hasari an appraising look for a moment, then...

(CONTINUED)
CONTINUED:

**Gangooly**

Ach! I have an offer. No, listen! Shiva be my witness, you must at least think about this. Please, I can help... Or my name is not Mr. Gangooly.

**Hasari**

Which, fortunately, it is.

EXT. STREET - MOVING SHOT - DAY

Gangooly guiding Hasari onward.

**Gangooly**

Remove the children from the school -- no, why? When you, the father, can make a small sacrifice. Nature has foreseen your plight. For she has given you two eyes, yes, and two kidneys. But. To live, you have need of one only. I have a friend who sold his kidney -- this one -- and now -- believe me, this is the truth -- he lives in a brick home... which he owns.

That smile.

EXT. SKELETON WAREHOUSE (MITRA & CO. EXPORTERS) - JUDAS DOOR - DAY

A forbidding face appears at the grill, stares out.

INT. SKELETON WAREHOUSE - DAY

Hasari and Gangooly enter. A repulsive smell almost makes Hasari gag. Gangooly takes Hasari's arm and steers him through the gloom. Hasari discovers the origin of the smell.

A line of skeletons arranged along the walls. Tables stacked with bones: skulls, spines, rib cages, hands and feet. Each skeleton sports a label with a price in U.S. dollars.

Crouched among the bones and packing crates are men working. Some smoke, some have masks over their faces. They scrape and clean and decorticate. They skillfully assemble their grisly creations, emotionless but like artists.
POV - MANAGER'S OFFICE - DAY

THROUGH a dusty, glass, interior window, we see, almost in mime, the manager examining Hasari.

INT. MANAGER'S OFFICE

With a smile, the manager produces some papers. Hasari shakes his head, starts for the door. Gangooly stops him.

GANGOOLY
Of course, take some time, think about it. People all over the world, anxiously waiting, willing to pay. 15,000 rupees for a kidney. 25,000 for an eye.

Gangooly winks, peers at Hasari with a single eye, and smiles.

INT./EXT. TAXI - ROAD TO AIRPORT - DAY

Heat haze on the road. As we FOCUS, we FIND Max, Joan, Aloka, also with their thoughts. Joan gazes out the window of the taxi. Max looks at the back of Joan's head a moment, then looks at Aloka, who sits between them. She deflects his eyes forward.

JOAN
Hasari has forbid her to have anything more to do with us. He'd be very angry if he knew she was seeing you off.

Max looks at Joan. Looks out the window.

INT. AIRPORT - DEPARTURE AREA - WIDE SHOT - DAY

First we see joyous people greeting arriving passengers; parents greet a young man returning from college abroad. The way clears and we CLOSE IN ON Max, Joan, and Aloka, a tiny island in this sea of people at the moment of their parting. Max empties all the money out of his pockets.

MAX
This is for Poomina. When I get home...

He thrusts the money on Joan and Max offers his hand; she goes through the hand to embrace Max. Then Max and Aloka look at each other.

(CONTINUED)
CONTINUED:

ALOKA

You did good things.
(chokes up, but
manages)
Thank you for coming to our
country.

And now Max heads out the door.

INT. CAFETERIA - ALOKA AND JOAN - DAY

Sparsely populated. They sit in isolation at a table
over a cup of tea.

JOAN
It's not like he's royalty or
anything, so I'm not persuaded we
have to wait for the plane to
actually take off.

ALOKA
No. We should go.

Yet, they remain another moment... then get up. Joan
puts her arm around Aloka and they turn to go. The looks
on their faces suggest they've come face to face with
something startling.

ANGLE ON DOOR

Max. Standing inside the departure doorway.

MAX
What were those three choices
again?

Their faces. And his with just a wistful version of his
old grin... and we --

FADE OUT.

FADE IN:

EXT. COMPOUND - DAY

Hasari returns. Goes into Ram's hut.

INT. RAM'S HUT - DAY

He finds his family... and Max. The two men stare at
each other.

(CONTINUED)
CONTINUED:

MAX
I need Aloka at the clinic.
(as Hasari stares)
All right, they, the patients,
need her. She's a good nurse.
(as Hasari stares)
Come on, man, this is between you
and me. Why take the kids out of
school, why punish your wife?

Hasari holds his anger in; he moves to a mat and lies
down, his back to Max. But Max doesn't go.

MAX
I have a little money, I can get
it from the States...

HASARI
It's not a question of money.
We'll survive on our own.

That's it. Hasari lies with his back to Max. After some
moments of silence, Aloka indicates Max should go. And
he does. After another moment...

ALOKA
Maybe he's right. The clinic is
for everyone and if I am needed --

Hasari bolts up, a look of anger on his face we've never
seen.

HASARI
No! I'm your husband and you'll
do as I say! Unless, of course,
you've become an American wife and
then you'll do as you please!

HASARI
Stay away from them. They are not
part of us. They will only be good
to you as long as you please them.

The children, Aloka are frozen, she very close to tears.
Hasari lies back down, again turns his back on them.

EXT. LEPER COLONY (DAWN) - DAY

The small colony alive; a line of patients outside a door.
INT. ROOM - DAY

Max unwraps a bandage from a leper's partial limb. Looks around for Aloka. She's not there. Said is acting as his nurse. Points at his instruments.

MAX
Hand me the scissors, please.

Helpfully Said hands him the tweezers.

MAX
Scissors, scissors.

He demonstrates. Said fumbles through the instruments, picking up the scissors by the ends.

MAX
Not that end -- No, that's fine, thanks, I've got it.

EXT. LEPER COLONY - DAY

Max comes out with his last patient. Anouar waits.

ANOUAR
Max Daddah, you are finished?
(Max nods)
Follow me.

Anouar takes off down the lane and disappears quickly into a little building, Max following.

INT. TANNERY - DAY

Max follows Anouar past bubbling cauldrons and heaps of animal skins. The place stinks fiercely. Anouar and Max exit into...

A SMALL YARD

Two young men (the two pullers Chomotkar and Ramatullah) ... and something covered with a tarp.

MAX
You didn't steal this.

RAMATULLAH
The police, Sahib, they stole it.
We stole it from them.

(CONTINUED)
CONTINUED:

The pullers whip the tarp off. A battered rickshaw, the springs poking out of the seat, the broken wheels lying in the body, the finish scarred and gouged, one shaft broken.

MAX

How much?

EXT. SQUARE - DAY

Max comes into the square. Aloka and Selima are preparing meals. Manooj, Shambu, and three other boys playing. Ram is trying to jolly Hasari, who's deep in his own reverie. Max stands in front of Hasari.

MAX

I'd like to show you something.
Just take a minute.

A beat as Hasari fixes Max with an empty stare and the family waits to see if Hasari will respond.

MAX

Go ahead. Go on.

EXT. COURTYARD AND STORAGE SHED - CLINIC

The sound of a PADLOCK being UNLOCKED. DARK SCREEN. Light flashes. Max and Hasari appear in the doorway. Surprised by the light, a few rats scurry off. Somewhere a dog BARKS. Slated, shafted light. He indicates a corner.

THE RICKSHAW

Piled up in its ruin.

MAX

I'm good with my hands. You're good with yours. What do you say?

Hasari looks at Max, part resentful, part touched.

HASARI

If I were to go on the street with this machine, I would end up in a gutter with my throat cut.

(CONTINUED)
CONTINUED:

MAX
Well, it's yours if you want it.
You know the license, the cops,
al that can be fixed. You'll
own this -- it'll have nothing to
do with the Godfather.

HASARI
Doctor Daddah, I'm just a small
man. Don't try to tempt me again
with big thoughts.

Hasari starts to leave. Max blocks his way.

MAX
You didn't want me to quit. Well,
I came back.

HASARI
But can you be trusted?

MAX
I hope so.

Hasari can see the hope and desire in Max's face. After
a moment, Max steps aside. Hasari bends his head and
makes off. Leaving Max and a small sigh of
disappointment.

EXT. LATRINES - FOUNTAIN - ALOKA - DAY (DAWN)

She takes her morning absolutions, bathing in the foun-
tain. The process is extremely sensual, though there is
not even a glimpse of her nakedness as she moves her
clothing around, cleansing this area, then that. She
glances up to see...

ANOTHER ANGLE

Max, in an Indian shirt, heading for the square; rather
naturally, he brings his hands together in the Indian
salutation. He carries several bottles of distilled
water, a large value pack of bar soap, and a carton of
medical supplies. As he passes, his eyes hook on
Aloka's. He lifts a hand in greeting. After a moment,
she ducks her head. He turns and continues on coming
face to face with Ram, an enormous smile on his face.
With him, Hasari. He glances at his wife in the water.

MAX
(to Hasari)
Going to look for work?

(CONTINUED)
CONTINUED:

When Hasari doesn't answer...

    RAM
    Yes, he is.

Ram has a small coughing fit.

    MAX
    Are you taking your medicine?

    RAM
    Yes, yes, but look at this.

He points at the wheel of his rickshaw; the rim is cracked. Scornfully, Hasari walks on. Max and Ram glance after him. Max digs out several rupees. Ram takes them and goes. Max looks after the two men as they disappear. When he turns...

ANOTHER ANGLE

...he finds himself face to face with Aloka. Without a word, they start walking side by side toward the square. It's several seconds before she says...

    ALOKA
    He's very proud.

They walk on in silence -- two friends, separated by a gulf.

EXT. DOCKS - FROM THE GATE - DAY

Men moving like ants into the bow of the ship. Hasari is locked out, turned away without work.

EXT. METRO CONSTRUCTION SITE - DAY

A huge gouge in the black mud, sunlight streaming through steel girders across it. Hasari emerges from the ground, looking for someone. Stops him. The foreman shakes his head, no, before Hasari even has the chance to ask for work.

EXT. SKELETON WAREHOUSE - EXTREME CLOSEUP - HASARI'S FACE - DAY

Then we see he's standing outside Mitra & Co., staring at it, wondering if it's time to sell part of himself. No! We see on his face a look that tells us he will not be beaten.
EXT. CLINIC - COURTYARD - DAY
The street children's school now takes up two rooms. Children peer out of one room now as, to the accompaniment of Surya's zither, twenty or so girls are doing some Indian classical dancing, under the eye of a young Indian teacher.

Across the way, in the other room, some children are translating Bengali words into English. A boy is writing on the board. It's Manooj. We see that Shambu is in the same class.

INT. EXAMINING ROOM
FROM BEHIND, we watch Max take a wrapping off of Poomina's wound, Joan assisting him. Indeed, Ashoka extended Poomina's smile on either side of her mouth. The scars are healing as nicely as could be expected. Max did a fine job.

MAX
You must have had a good doctor. Still no running, jumping, picking up anything heavy. And you stay here. You're going to help Sister Joan and you're going to school. Do you understand?

A beat, Poomina nods. But now a look of abject fear comes over her face.

The Goonda stands in the doorway. Max begins singing "Sweet Little Sixteen." The Goodna stares impassively at Max.

THE GOONDA
Time to collect the rent, Sister.

JOAN
Of course. Come with me, please.

Joan leaves, followed by The Goonda. Max works carefully at the fine line of scabbing on Poomina's scar... but then something takes his attention.

ACROSS THE COURTYARD

Manooj, with a small tin of food, looks this way and that... and then sneaks into the shed.

EXT. SHED - DAY

We hear a, TAP, TAP, TAP. The door is half open. The padlock is hanging on its chain. Max opens the door.
INT. STORAGE ROOM

Startled, frightened, Hasari presses himself against the wall, as does Manooj. Hasari is wearing a wet dhoti, caught in the middle of straightening the wheel rim of the old rickshaw.

HASARI
Close the door!

Max is very surprised but, needless to say, pleased. He looks at the rickshaw, looks at Hasari.

HASARI
Close the door. The Godfather has more eyes than a pineapple.

Max quickly closes the door. The half light is broken by thin beams of light that dance with dust.

Hasari studies Max a moment, then moves to put the first wheel on. Instinctively, Manooj moves to his side, takes hold of the rickshaw so Hasari can slip the wheel on. Hasari nods and goes for the other wheel. Manooj moves around to the other side, hefts the carcass. Hasari slips on the second wheel. Hasari looks at Max. Max brings his hands together and starts to go.

HASARI
I was saying to Manooj that if a man bows down too many times, there will come a day when he will no longer be able to stand upright.

The two men look at each other... and then Hasari gets on with his work.

MAX
I promised Manooj and Shambu I'd take them to the movies. Is it all right?

HASARI
(a beat)
If a man makes a promise...

Max brings his hands together and starts for the door. Hasari picks up one of the worn seat boards.

INT. MOVIE THEATER - NIGHT

We're TRACKING WITH a moving bag of peanuts behind a row of boy's heads. On the screen in front of them, a "medieval era" sword battle between the great Kumar Kapur and a legion of bad guys.

(CONTINUED)
CONTINUED:

We hear the sound of CRACKING NUTS as we MOVE FROM Manooj to three kids we've seen in the neighborhood (two boys Manooj's age and Shoba, who's Shambu's age) and then to Shambu, each kid dipping into the bag in his turn. Finally: Max's (and on the other side of him, Amrita and Poomina.) The bag arrives... empty.

MAX
(whispering)
Thanks, guys. Who wants to go for more peanuts?

No one. We're talking about rapt attention. We hear NUTS CRACKING. Max smiles.

EXT. STREET - NEAR CITY OF JOY - NIGHT

Max and the boys walking home after the movie, the boys dancing around each other, acting out the fight sequences, all of the sword-fighting against Max, who battles them all over the street, in and around cars, Poomina and Amrita looking on shyly, as El Max fights to save their honor.

MANOOJ
I can't decide if I want to be Kumar Kapur or a doctor.

MAX
Ha ha! You can be both! Manooj Pal, swashbuckling physician!

MANOOJ
You're so much fun, El Max. I wish my daddy were as much fun as you.

Max stops the fight, takes Manooj by the shoulders.

MAX
I wish my father loved me like your father loves you. Your dad's a very special man. And now, en garde!

As the battle continues, the bright beams of a truck come at them.

MAX
Time out, men. Off the street till this truck passes.

(CONTINUED)
CONTINUED:

The kids move toward the wall of the building they're passing, but the truck seems to turn toward them, seeming not to intend to pass, but to hit them.

The look on Max's face lets us know he senses something terrible is in the offing here. He shouts for the kids to get out of the way, shoving the kids closest to him into a doorway. He turns to Shambu, who's behind him, calls to him.

But in a panic, Shambu doesn't move into the shelter of the building on his right... but tries to run across the street. Max leaps for the little boy too late... as the truck just misses Max and clips Shambu hard, sending the little boy flying.

EXT. SQUARE - NIGHT

Manooj runs ahead of everyone as he charges into Ram's hut, crying for his father. Behind Manooj come the others, Max carrying Shambu in his arms. Hasari and Aloka, Ram, Joan, others in the square hurtle out of their huts.

MAX
I can't do anything here. He's got a compound fracture, he hemorrhaging. We've got to get to a hospital -- now!

JOAN
You'll never get a taxi at this hour.

EXT STREET - HASARI'S FEET - DAY (EARLY EVENING)

He pounds along, the wheels wobbling and squeaking, urging people out of his way. Max runs alongside Hasari. Aloka sits on the seat with Shambu, whose quiet moaning fills her ears. Blood drips down the rickshaw.

EXT. PARK STREET - FROM THE RICKSHAW - DAY

Several taxis waiting for clients outside a row of restaurants. Hasari and Aloka watch as Max argues with the drivers. They won't take a bleeding passenger.

SAME STREET - MOMENTS LATER

The race to the hospital continues.
EXT. MEDWAR PINE MEMORIAL HOSPITAL - NIGHT

The arrive at the gates of the huge, Victorian hospital. People sleep outside the gates.

INT. HOSPITAL - CORRIDOR - SIDE ROOM - DAY

The wards are full, as are the corridors. Patients on beds and stretchers everywhere. Most have at least one member of their family to look over them. In a side room, Max is arguing with a porter who tells him he can't help him. Max slaps some rupees into the porter's hand, tells him to take him to the person in charge.

Shambu is fading. Aloka smooths the sweat from his brow, trying to keep Shambu alive by force of will and love. Then Max is back, standing over her with another man. It may take a moment before we recognize the ATTENDANT from the Blood Bank.

MAX
They'll admit him, but we have to pay for the blood. I gave him all I had. He wants more. Do you have anything?

ALOKA
Sister Joan gave me this.

Aloka holds out a fistful of rupees. The Attendant blows through his lips, indicating it's a paltry sum. Max grabs the money and shoves it at the Attendant.

MAX
We haven't got any more!

The Attendant doesn't move... until he sees Max is about to explode.

MAX
If this child dies while you stand here, I'll kill you.

The Attendant is smart enough not to push any further.

MAX
Now, I need an X-ray room and I need an O.R. nurse.

ATTENDANT
Not possible. You can't give care, you're an American. You must be an Indian doctor.

(CONTINUED)
CONTINUED:

MAX
Then take me to one!

As Max takes flight with the Attendant, Aloka strokes Shambu and Hasari hovers. We CLOSE IN ON Shambu's inanimate face and HOLD a moment.

ANOTHER ANGLE

Max hurtles down the corridor with a young INTERN in tow. Almost a kid, he's been up for days. But he's going to help.

INTERN
This way, please.

Max scoops Shambu up and rushes down the corridor behind the Intern, leaving Hasari and Aloka looking after him. His arm comes around her shoulders.

EXT. HOSPITAL - DAY (DAWN)

Hasari and Aloka wait. People are starting to move about.

HASARI
You're my wife, Aloka, you and my children are all my wealth. But if Max Daddah and Big Sister Joan have need of you, you may go to them.

Max comes out of the hospital. The two Pals stare at him.

MAX
We pinned his leg. Couple of months, he'll be better than ever. They want to keep him today. We're a good team. Gimme five.

He smiles, holds out a palm for them to slap. They look at the palm, unsure what this means. Yet, each takes Max's hand.

EXT. CLINIC - COURTYARD - DAY

The whole community is here, around the tree.

(CONTINUED)
CONTINUED:

JOAN
I don't think it was an accident. I think they were aiming for Max. So, what we have to ask ourselves is whether his presence is endangering all of us.

ANOUAR
Even from my low vantage point, I know this: It's the son. He's mad.

HASARI
Max Daddah is our friend. If they're trying to harm him, then they're trying to harm all of us. We must stand by him as one.

INT. SHED - CLOSE ON TWO PAINTBRUSHES - NIGHT
dip into a little box of paints. The boys look on as the two men paint an intricate design on the shafts. Shambu sits in the rickshaw seat. He wears an ankle to hip cast. Manooj is spelling words and urging Shambu to follow suit. Aloka is putting out a tray of food. Ram, Ramatullah, and Chomotkar slip in, quickly close the door. The two pullers focus on the rickshaw, Ram on Max.

RAM
Doctor Daddah, please, very important, only one moment.

MAX
This is going to cost me every rupee I didn't make today.

Ram thrusts an envelope into Max's hand.

MAX
A letter from your wife.

Ram nods nervously. Max looks at the postmark as he slices it open with a finger.

MAX
This is postmarked six weeks ago.

RAM
So?

(CONTINUED)
CONTINUED:

MAX
So, what have you been doing -- incubating it?

RAM
I was afraid.

Ram waits, his hands twisting each other.

MAX
'My dear husband...'

RAM
Oh that's very hopeful so far!

MAX
'Your words brought tears of joy to my arid eyes.'

RAM
Oh, I'm in love! My words brought tears to her arid eyes! (then fearful)
What does that mean -- arid?

Manooj throws his hand up.

MANOOJ
I know! Dry.

MAX
Correct. Her eyes were dry, your letter irrigated them.

RAM
Aaah!

He snatches the letter, crushes it to his heart. Notices the finish work on the rickshaw.

CHOMOTKAR
This is a puka nasgar. What a curse that you can't use it.

HASARI
I'm going on the streets tomorrow.

This gets everyone's attention. The pullers shake their heads, they're worried for him.

MAX
Listen. I don't want you to think I'm crazy, but I don't think that truck was an accident.
(MORE)
CONTINUED:

MAX CONT'D)  
I think Ashoka was after me. You can bet he'll be after you too.

HASARI  
I'm going to speak to his father.

MAX  
Can I go with you? I'll go with you. Can I go with you if I shut up?

A beat... and Hasari gives him a small nod.

EXT. GODFATHER'S HOUSE - DAY

Ghatak is literally carried out of the house by an orderly and placed into his car. There's a driver and there is the Goonda. They start down the street. We're WITH the car. Suddenly, the driver slams on the brakes and from:

ANOTHER ANGLE

We see Hasari and Max blocking the street with the new rickshaw. The Goonda jumps out of the car, comes threateningly at Hasari.

HASARI  
Babu, please, I beg you, hear my words!

As the Goonda is about to land on Hasari we hear a feeble...

GHATAK  
Wait.

The Goonda backs off. The Godfather waves Hasari and Max close. Hasari brings his gleaming rickshaw to the window of the car, Max at his shoulder.

HASARI  
May I say first, Babu, I wish you long life and good health.

GHATAK  
Acha! They take me now to the scientists. They stick needles in me, take pictures of my insides, study them, and then tell me what I know.

(CONTINUED)
CONTINUED:

The Godfather stares at Hasari, flicks his eyes at Max. Waits.

HASARI
When you gave me work, I swore I would be as your youngest brother. Your son thinks I have been disloyal. He took my rickshaw. With my friend, I have remade this one. I beg you to let me go again onto the streets. I have my family.

The old man looks at the rickshaw, at the obvious care that went into its renovation, at this unlikely team of refurbishers. He reaches a shaking hand out toward a shaft. Hasari brings it close. The old man rubs the shaft.

GHATAK
It is very beautiful.

HASARI
Thank you, Babu.

GHATAK
If I may say, it has an allure.

HASARI
An allure, Babu -- thank you.

The Godfather stares at Hasari, then at Max.

GHATAK
The world is chaos. We struggle to build something permanent, then our bodies betray us, our sons betray us.

(to Hasari now)
Yes, you may take your rickshaw out. If you can face up to my son.

The Goonda gets back into the car and the car pulls away and we are left with Hasari and Max as moment.

EXT. SKELETON WAREHOUSE (MITRA & CO) - DAY

Hasari enters.

INT. MANAGER'S OFFICE - DAY

The manager stares at Hasari, as he consumes a pot of rice and vegetable curry. Gangooly hovers like a crow. Hasari stares at the contract before him.

(CONTINUED)
HASARI
If a man dies and he's not burned, what do you think becomes of his soul?

The manager turns his palms up, continues chewing. Hasari stares through the window at the row of skeletons.

HASARI
I must provide for my family.

GANGOOLY
Oh, it's a noble fate. If indeed your wheel ceases to turn, you will help educate somewhere in this great world a fine doctor.

Hasari bends to the contract and laboriously signs his name.

EXT. GODFATHER'S HOUSE - DAY

Hasari arrives to an outcry of anger. There are several dozen rickshaws. Among the passersby, we see umbrellas, as the people on the street try to combat the incredible heat.

HASARI
What's going on?

CHOMOTKAR
The Godfather ill! The son is raising the rent!

Ashoka is on his front steps with a loudspeaker before a growing crowd of pullers. He's backed up by the Goonda and a dozen of his thugs. The loudspeaker lifts Ashoka's voice above the anger.

ASHOKA
Do you know how much it costs to change the spoke in a wheel? Or how much baksheesh I have to pay the police?

Impulsively, Hasari moves forward. Cries from pullers: "Who will be the victims of this madness? You?" "Hell no!" "You don't need the six rupees each old crate brings you per day to fill your belly! For us, it means death!" The street is so packed with rickshaw and pullers now that cars can't get through. A chorus of HORNs HONK; drivers scream.

(CONTINUED)
CONTINUED:

RAMATULLAH
We haven't been breaking our backs between the shafts of our rickshaws in order to weep for you!

Hasari continues forward, his eyes on Ashoka.

CHOMOTKAR
The only thing that matters is the bundle of rupees we take to the munshi each month to feed and to answer the daily needs of our children!

RASSOUL steps up on a telagarhi with a loudspeaker.

RASSOUL
Listen to me! Listen now! Listen to me!
(when the pullers quiet)
Friends! I ask you to vote for an unlimited strike. Inkalabad zindabad! Long live the revolution! Rickshaw Workers Union zindabad!

A strike? No income at all? The slogan is taken up by a small percentage of the assemblage. Fear and doubt on many faces.

ASHOKA
That's what I thought. All right, get to work! Customers are waiting!

ON HASARI

Something detonates in him and he jumps onto the telagarhi and grabs the microphone from Ashoka. Police arrive in vans.

HASARI
Friends! The Godfather at least is a caring man! This one, though, the son --

A signal from Ashoka and one of the thugs knocks Hasari down.

(CONTINUED)
CONTINUED:

ASHOKA

We helped this man! We gave him a job, a place to live! This is how he shows his gratitude. Get on the streets now! Or turn in your machines!

Hasari gets up and tries to speak.

HASARI

Friends -- don't! If we stand --

He gets hit again. A number of the pullers come forward and a riot starts. The police move in, beat and arrest many of the demonstrators. Ramatullah and Chomotkar try to help Hasari, but they are descended on by cops who hurl them aside and beat Hasari senseless until the:

SCREEN GOES BLACK.

FADE IN:

INT. BONSAL COURT - DAY

Birds flying below ceiling. The room has a barred cage running all around its edge; the cage is filled to near overflowing. Hasari stands before the JUDGE, his face covered with blood, his body a mass of aches and welts. At the back of the room, Max and Aloka; elsewhere, Ashoka, the Goonda, and several of his thugs.

HASARI

The life of a rickshaw puller is not one a man would choose if he had a choice. Our feet blister and burn up from the boiling asphalt, our noses burn from the fumes of countless motor cars and buses, our backs curve permanently from the loads we carry hour after hour, day after day. But I am proud to be one of the human horses who carry my countryman from place to place and I am thankful for the opportunity to make a living. But I will not keep silent anymore and I will not be cheated and threatened anymore. Life is hard enough. No more.

Ramatullah starts to applaud. Rassoul follows suit. The Judge bangs his gavel.

(CONTINUED)
CONTINUED:

JUDGE
Silence!
(when it's silent)
This man will be permitted to
use his rickshaw without let or
hindrance. And I will make a
restraining order against Mr.
Ghatak.

Cheers from the pullers. The Judge bangs his gavel.

JUDGE
I haven't finished these
proceedings. For his part in this
disturbance, I fine the defendant
50 rupees.

HASARI
Fifty rupees, Your Honor?
That's --

JUDGE
Pay at this time or spend seven
days in jail!

Seven days in jail will cost him far more than fifty
rupees. As he reaches into his pocket for his screw
of money, a hand suddenly protrudes into the cage through
the bars.

RAMATULLAH
Hasari!

And now another hand with several rupees reaches through.

RASSOUL
Hasari!

Now a dozen voices call his name and a dozen hands reach
through the bars with rupees clutched in their fists and
press the money into Hasari's hands. The Judge, Max and
Aloka, and certainly Ashoka watch this in amazement. The
Judge bangs his gavel.

Max turns, shoots a little finger gun and winks at Ashoka.

CLOSE ON ASHOKA

ON his face, we see pure hatred for these two men.
EXT. CITY OF JOY - DAY

Amrita, Manooj, and Shambu. With them, Subash flirting with Amrita, incurring the wrath and admiration of her brothers, causing her to flush.

THUNDER sounds. They all look up. Rain starts to fall. People run outside of workshops and huts, crying, "The rains, the rains." Suddenly, a THUNDERCLAP shakes the earth and rain begins to bombard them. The rain falls, the WIND HOWLS, and people in the lane are dancing, praising the beginning of the monsoon season. Men tear off their shirts, women rush out fully clothed, singing. Swarms of naked children run about. The kids run toward the clinic/school.

EXT. CLINIC COURTYARD - DAY

Hasari is locking his rickshaw into the shed. Staff and several patients come out of the examining rooms -- Joan, Aloka, Sunil, Anouar, Poomina. Margareta and her students, a new teacher, Bandonia, her students come out of the classrooms... They're all swept up in dancing, Joan's metal cross jumping about as if it were beating out time.

From his balcony, Max emerges with his trumpet and plays the first bars of "Singin' In the Rain." Everyone looks his way; he begins to hum and sing as he jumps over the balcony to the ground and takes off in a wild, improvised, but damn good version of Gene Kelly's dance in the rain, bringing Anouar on his cart in as his dancing partner. Everyone in the courtyard crowds around them, laughing and encouraging the dancer/singers on. The number builds to an extraordinary climax with Max sliding through mud to an exquisite finish at Joan's feet. There's thunderous applause.

INT. CLINIC - NIGHT

Rain. Max, The Pals, Ram, Joan, Anouar, Meeta and the Baby, Poomina, Saladdin, Mehboub, Ashish, Shanta, Margareta, Bandonia, and the other members of the committee sharing a meal.

HASARI
Really -- a boyfriend, Amrita?

AMRITA
No!

Amrita whacks Manooj.

(Continued)
CONTINUED:

MANOOJ
Yes, she does. His name is Subash Ghosh. His father owns the workshop.

HASARI
Is there someone you care about?

The look in Amrita's eyes tells us indeed there is. Hasari smiles at Amrita and then at Aloka.

HASARI
Then I must speak to his father and I must complete your dowry.

Amrita squeezes close to her mother. This is serious and joyous.

HASARI
You will make people sigh at how beautiful you are. And I shall drop tears of joy.

RAM
At my wedding I became so frightened, my father gave me things to drink to calm me down. I went out to piss and fell asleep under the village tree. When I woke I thought it was the tree I'd married. I still love that tree.

The laugh. But Hasari's attention is on his daughter. He reaches a loving hand to her.

INT. GREEN ACRES - MAX'S BATHROOM - TUB FAUCET - NIGHT

A rag has been wrapped around the faucet and water runs slowly and silently down into the nearly filled tub. The scene is illuminated dimly by a flashlight with fingers over the beam.

ON MAX

He sleeps. Suddenly he's grabbed, his eyes spring open in fear. Hands yanks him out of bed, slam him up against the wall, then hurtle him across the room and into:

BATHROOM

Where the tub has been filled. His head is slammed down underwater and he's held there struggling.

(CONTINUED)
CONTINUED:

His head is yanked up and through bleary eyes he sees a 
knife at his throat and the Hebrew letter chai dangling 
from the knife - wielder's neck, illuminated by a 
flashlight.

ASHOKA
  Go home, Doctor.

Before he can respond, he's slammed down into the tub of 
water again and held there until it seems his lungs will 
explode. Then he's dumped backward, gasping for breath.

EXT. CITY OF JOY - SQUARE - NIGHT

Max on the run through the rain, carrying his belongings.

CLINIC

He pounds through the puddles, past a sleepy old watchman, 
and through the gate.

INT. COURTYARD - NIGHT

He bangs on Joan's door. She opens the door in her Indian 
pajamas. One look at him...

JOAN
  What's happened?

MAX
  Ashoka ordered me to go home. 
  Well, I've come home.

A beat. She steps aside, he steps in, and the door closes 
him safely inside.

EXT. PARK CIRCUS - DAY

The rickshaw station. The rain pours down. People 
clambor for rickshaws. The line moves forward as fast 
as the pullers can take on passengers. Hasari, Ram, 
Ramatullah, Chomotkar look at the stalled buses, the 
streetcars, the taxis, the private cars.

CHOMOTKAR
  What a joy it is to survey this 
  disaster! We will all make a 
  fortune!

(CONTINUED)
CONTINUED:

HASARI
The monsoon is the great Durga's gift to the human horse!

Hasari glances at Ram, who isn't a part of the joking.

HASARI
What's the matter?

RAM
I'm wet and I'm cold. Your daughter is getting married. Time is passing. I want to go home to my wife.

Chomotkar touches Hasari, nods across the street. There, we see the Goonda and two thugs.

RAMATULLAH
Hasari!

It's Hasari's turn. He can't stay to talk with Ram now. He has to go.

MARWARI #4
How much to the market?

HASARI
Eight rupees.

MARWARI #4
What! I won't pay it!

HASARI
Who else needs a ride? I am available at a price!

Several others crowd and shove toward him.

MARWARI #4
No! Take me -- I'll pay, let's go!

HASARI
The price just went up! Ten rupees! In advance.

The Marwari hesitates only as long as it takes him to dig in his soaking wet pants and to slap the bills into Hasari's hand and climb aboard. Hasari sets out with great difficulty -- and greater determination -- through the floodwaters, flicking his eyes at the Goonda as he goes.
EXT. WEDDING SHOP - DAY

Water pours down. FROM HERE we see Hasari inside, putting money down in front of the shop owner and then hustling back into the rain and taking up his shafts. We WATCH the owner look after him with a touch of disdain as he comes into the window and takes down the beautiful green and gold sari.

EXT. CLINIC - GUTTERS - NIGHT

Water pouring from above; the gutters overflow with refuse. We PAN UP to the clinic.

INT. CLINIC COURTYARD

Water pouring off the room into the courtyard. Hasari locks his rickshaw into the shed and turns out, attention to Max, Aloka, Joan, Poomina, Margareta, Mehboub, several others trying to patch leaking roof tiles and keep supplies high and dry.

INT. CLINIC ROOM

Hasari enters. Max looks at him, doesn't like the look of the obviously exhausted man.

HASARI

How can I help?

EXT. CIRCULAR ROAD - FISTFUL OF RUPEES (RUNNING MONTAGE) - DAY

An Anglo couple jockeying for preference. Hasari selects them from a crowd. This is the beginning of RUNNING MONTAGE.

A) He runs AT us from different directions with riders -- pushing, pushing -- the water getting higher, our FOCUS VARIOUSLY IN NORMAL AND SLOW MOTION ON his feet, his tensed muscles; for a moment, we hear only his breathing, the sound of his feet on the pavement, the RAIN AGAINST the CANOPY of the rickshaw.

B) He drags up with an entire, well-to-do family of six, packed into the rickshaw.

C) He stumbles to a stop outside the emergency entrance to the hospital, carrying a mother and her sick child.

(CONTINUED)
CONTINUED:

D) An upper-crust Brahmin dressed in crisp white, an umbrella protecting him against the harsh elements.

E) Four uniformed school children huddled, laughing together under the rickshaw's canopy.

INT. LEPER COLONY - MEETA'S ROOM - DAY

The rain continues, as does the work in the clinic. Max is working on Anouar, Aloka assisting. Meeta and the baby (now 6 months old) in the b.g.

ANOUAR
I think Aloka would have a gentler touch than you, Max Daddah. Maybe she should perform this surgery on her own.

Aloka ducks her eyes, embarrassed.

MAX
Last time you told me you were more than two women could manage.

ANOUAR
Yes, but given a choice between one and none, I will accept the one.

Max lifts Anouar off the table and places him on his cart.

MAX
Okay, you ought to be good for another few days. Send in the next patient.

Anouar scoots out. Max and Aloka both turn to the instruments lying on the table and knock a pair of scissors to the floor. Simultaneously, they bend to pick it up and bang heads.

LOW ANGLE

The first impulse of each is to touch the other's head. But almost simultaneously, their hands freeze short of touching. Several months ago, Max might have tried to kiss her; now, though, there is friendship and affection. FROM here, we see a pair of bare feet. We COME WITH Max and Aloka UP.
ANOTHER ANGLE

Shoba, a deeply concerned look on his face. Slowly his hands come forward, holding his parrot, with a broken wing. He puts the parrot on the examining table.

INT. POST OFFICE - DAY

Hasari seals a letter and a money order into an envelope, seals, and puts it into the slot. He is clearly exhausted. Outside he can see two Sikh merchants at his rickshaw, looking around in the rain for him. He hurries toward the door.

HASARI
Here! I'm here!

INT. SUBASH'S HOUSE - NIGHT

Aloka and three women huddled beside a window, Amrita half hidden behind them. We PAN ACROSS a staircase TO another window, THROUGH which we see a doorway. In the doorway, Subash turns to smile a shy smile at Amrita; he shrugs. PAST him now, we see Hasari facing SUBASH'S FATHER and three UNCLEs, surly men with hair matted with mustard oil. The Ghoshes are all seated on low chairs and stools. Hasari is standing.

INT. ROOM - NIGHT

Mr. Ghosh and the Uncles stare at Hasari, who stands politely and hopefully before them.

MR. GHOSH (SUBASH'S FATHER)
You're a rickshaw puller, am I correct?

HASARI
Yes, that's correct.

He looks at his brothers, on either side. They look at him.

MR. GHOSH
And I a partner in the workshop where your daughter is employed. Were you aware of that?

HASARI
Yes, yes, I was, my daughter told me, thank you.

(CONTINUED)
CONTINUED:

MR. GHOSH
Yes, well then, perhaps you can
tell me why I would permit my son
to marry your daughter.

Mr. Ghosh raises his palms. It's all over as far as
he's concerned.

UNCLE #1
Just a moment, please.

The brothers huddle, whisper just loudly enough for
Hasari to hear.

UNCLE #1
Are you saying there's no way
you'd consider this match?

Mr. Ghosh shakes his head, shrugs his palms.

UNCLE #1
Perhaps some inducement? Would
that be of any help?

MR. GHOSH
(considering this)
What could he possibly offer?

UNCLE #1
Probably nothing. But perhaps,
in fairness, we should find out.

Mr. Ghosh shrugs. The huddle breaks. All five men
stare at Hasari.

EXT. STREETS - DAY

Hasari, mouth half open, flecked with spume, pulls a
huge Marwari. He's pouring sweat, his eyes are blood-
shot. He has never looked more like a horse.

They arrive at a cross street. The Marwari gets down
and pays Hasari. Hasari slumps against the rickshaw
and, while he awaits his next rider, counts his crum-
pled pile of notes and coins.

EXT. CLINIC - DAY

Max, Joan, Aristotle John, Margareta, Mehboub, perhaps
a dozen others trying to raise the level of the low
wall at the entrance with bricks. The wall caves in.
Other people in the neighborhood rush to rebuild it.

(CONTINUED)
CONTINUED:

MAX
(shouting to the others)
My dear friends, it's just occurred to me what inspired me to stay here.

Thinking he's about to make some cogent remark about this unified effort...

MARGARETA
What's that, Doctor Big Brother?

MAX
The opportunity to acquire waterfront property at a reasonable price.

Joan begins to laugh; the others don't get it, query each other as to what's funny about that.

JOAN
I hate to admit it, junior, but that was actually quite witty.

She whacks him on the shoulder with a wet, muddy paw.

JOAN
Ut-nobody laugh; it's a natural disaster -- we have guests.

Everyone turns to...

ANOTHER ANGLE

Manubai and Ravi, their car parked at the entryway to the clinic. A big puddle separates them.

MAX
I'd throw my cape down, but I'm all out of dry capes.

He sloshes through the water to them, wiping his muddy hands on his pants. He offers a semi-clean hand to each in turn.

MAX
It's very nice to see you. Both of you.

RAVI
We heard you were still here. Vijay wanted to send some things.
CONTINUED:

She indicates the car, which is packed with dry food and such.

MAX
Shall we unload the car?

RAVI
Yes, yes, by all means.

Max whistles, indicates the car. People come and start unloading it, Ravi showing the way, leaving Max and Manubai alone a moment, Aloka flicking her eyes at the two of them.

MANUBAI
I'm surprised. I really didn't think you'd stick it out.

MAX
People grow older; sometimes they even grow up.

He smiles a sweet smile at her. She smiles back at him.

EXT. MUD BANK - WIDE SHOT - DAY

Anouar on Said's shoulders. The big mute runs, followed by Hasari and a phalanx of rickshaw pullers: Chomotkar, Rassoul, Ramatullah-Joan, Aloka, Manooj, several others in the rickshaws, Max and Sunil, each with his doctor bag -- all of them running in silhouette along the embankment in the rain.

ARISTOTLE JOHN
Where can we take them? We can't take them back to the clinic. No one will put up with it.

SALADDIN
We can't let them drown, can we? Eh, Max Daddah?

EXT. LEPER COLONY - DAY

The leper colony is submerged. The parents have put their children on the roofs and the relatively able-bodied lepers are piling charpoys one on top of another to protect the sick and the infirm. Meeta and her baby are on a roof. The mud bank is too slippery to get the rickshaws down and back up.

HASARI
It's too deep! (CONTINUED)
CONTINUED:

A beat.

EXT. LEPER COLONY - PAIR MUDDY, PARTIAL HANDS - SAME DAY - SOME MINUTES LATER

A leper clings to a rope as several of the human horses pull him and others up the mud bank.

ANOTHER ANGLE

Max, Hasari, Rassoul, and Chomotkar up to their necks in water; Hasari and Rassoul have a door on their shoulders; on top of the door, a sick leper woman. Max is lifting one child, then another onto the door. The two pullers make their way slowly toward the mud bank.

ON MUD BANK

Aloka, Joan, helping lepers into rickshaw.

MEETA

Anouar!

ANOUAR

Max Daddah!

ON MEETA AND BABY

The hut starts to come apart under them. Max and Chomotkar quickly move to the house with another door.

MAX

We're here! We're here!

Chomotkar holds the door up as Meeta holds the baby out in the direction of Max's voice. Max catches the baby as the house slips down, then grabs Meeta, who clings to him.

EXT. MUD BANK - DAY

Hasari pulling the lead rickshaw. Anouar on Max's shoulders, the two of them leading a terrible ensemble version of "Hound Dog." An air of festivity among lepers and rescuers.

They come to a bridge made of two planks over rushing water.

(CONTINUED)
CONTINUED:

Several rickshaws go across but as Max and Anouar start over, suddenly the ground gives way beneath Max's feet. Anouar falls free; someone grabs him; but a blackish stream rushes into Max's mouth and in an instant he's swept beneath the gurgling filth. The density of the filth makes his effort to surface ineffective. It looks for all the world like he's going to drown.

ON OTHERS

Max has disappeared. Instinctively, Hasari dives into the maelstrom. He, too, disappears. After some moments, Hasari surfaces, spitting the filth out of his mouth. He dives again, comes up somewhere else. Dives a third time. Is down. Is down. Is down. Then suddenly bursts out of the filth, dragging the unconscious form of Max Loeb into the air. More people have gathered. Cries of:

OTHERS

It's the doctor. Save Doctor Big Brother!

Aloka passes a baby to someone and helps Hasari push Max up onto the bank. But now Hasari doesn't know what to do and turns to his wife.

Aloka quickly clears Max's mouth and begins to administer mouth-to-mouth resuscitation. She blows, she breathes; she blows, she breathes. People crowd in. Aloka blows, she breathes. It seems, though, that by his stillness and by the looks on people's faces that Max is dead. Yet, more determined still, Aloka goes on; blows, breathes...

CLOSE ON ALOKA AND MAX

And now Max gags, his body erupts in spasm, and he explodes a stream of black liquid out of his lungs. Aloka supports his forehead as Max retches again and then comes still. A beat.

INT. CLASSROOM - NIGHT

We PAN ACROSS members of our group -- lepers and normals -- passing bowls of rice in a simple communal meal, Singing a religious song quietly. On the floor in the b.g., Anouar is writing something on a slightly damp stretch of cloth with a child's crayon. Said takes the cloth and tacks it to the wall. What Anouar has written is this, "All that is not given is lost." Everyone in the room stares at the words.
INT. CLINIC - MAX'S ROOM - NIGHT

Max opens his eyes to find Joan, Hasari, Aloka, and the children keeping a vigil.

MAX
Oh, Jesus, the guy went to sleep when he was supposed to be working? I gotta get up --

He tries to get up. Joan pushes him back down.

JOAN
Sshh, sshh, sshh! No heroics, junior. Lay back. You're all right.

MAX
All right.
(a distant laugh)
Yeah, I am, I'm all right.

He is a little delirious. The boys come close, kneel at his side, instinctively reach out to him.

MAX
Want you guys to know something. About me. Wanted to be the world's greatest heart surgeon, just one better than my dad. Just one. First time I'm the lead surgeon on a case, the main guy, I choke. Froze. The chief made me step aside. My teacher. Had to take over for me. Went into radiology. Photography. Had to have somethin' easy. No pressure. Wasn't too nuts about myself. Quit.

Hasari reaches out and touches Max, telling him with a touch that it's all right. He stares up through bleary eyes at all of them with utterly open love. Amrita holds out a small gift to him: It's a banana leaf, holding a small scoop of rice and surrounded by little decorative leaves.

MAX
You people... You...
(a beat)
I love you guys.

EXT. RAM'S HUT - TWO MONTHS LATER - DAY

A group gathered on a dry, sunny afternoon, peering into the hut. We focus on the growing flower in the tea caddy in the window and then go through the window into:
INT. PALS' ROOM - DAY

Hasari, Max (dressed quite India), the local Hara Giri, Mr. Ghosh and the four Ghosh uncles crammed into the tiny room. Members of our group jam the doorway, spectating. The air is close.

    HASARI
    I can offer no more than I've offered! No more! All right, I'll add two dhotis, two vests, and a punjabi. But that's all.

Mr. Ghosh lights up a bidi, looks at his brothers, wrinkles his brows at Hasari.

    MR. GHOSH
    That's all? Did he say that's all?

    HASARI
    My daughter's qualities will make up for what is lacking.

    SUBASH'S FATHER
    Well, it won't do! I am firm in requiring for my exceptional son the bicycle, 1000 repees... and one ounce of gold.

    HASARI
    That's robbery! The child of a rajah might be worth that, and I'm not even sure of that! Impossible!

We linger on Shambu a moment.

INT. ST. PIUS SCHOOL - HEADMISTRESSES' OFFICE - DAY

Sister Cecilia, in full habit, looks over a sheaf of test scores.

Then she peers up at...

ANOTHER ANGLE

Manooj, seated between Hasari and Max.

    SISTER CECILIA
    Well, indeed I think Sister Joan is right -- we've got a prospect here. We'll start you off with a few classes; if that works out, we'll make a proper student of you.

(CONTINUED)
CONTINUED:

Hasari can't believe his ears. Manooj sits frozen. Max grins.

EXT. NARROW LANE - NEAR CITY OF JOY - DAY

Amrita, Subash, and Shambu heading home from the workshop. Shambu's cast is gone. Subash flirts with Amrita. They see Hasari, Max, and Manooj coming toward them. Manooj runs to them, shouting that he's going to the school; Amrita, Subash, Shambu congratulate him...

HASARI AND MAX

Suddenly the rickshaw wheels jam. They turn to find two men, one of whom has slammed a stick into Hasari's spokes. Retribution, it would seem, has arrived.

The kids stop, huddle instinctively together in fear.

Our policeman disappears into a doorway as shutters close up and down this little street. There are thugs at both ends. No one else is visible on the street.

The two men stare at Hasari a moment, smiling. Then one gets into the rickshaw, crosses his legs as if he might want transport. But now he whips out a narrow bladed knife, and still staring at Hasari, begins to slice up the newly covered seats of the rickshaw. Max looks around, trying to cool things.

MAX
Hey, come on, don't do this.

VOICE
Well, what's the problem here?

They turn, Ashoka. Behind him, the Goonda.

ASHOKA
You've become very brave of late, haven't you?

MAX
Don't do this.

ASHOKA
Oh, I do what I please. You see, my father's dead, I'm in charge now. So you will get off my streets, you will leave my country, and that clinic and school will close.

(CONTINUED)
CONTINUED:

MAX

Why?

ASHOKA

My father was weak. He let you and your European friend give these little people ideas. It's over.

MAX

You can't do this!

He takes no more than a step at Ashoka, a hand coming up, when he's hit hard from behind. Goes to his knees.

MAX

Jesus Christ.

His hand comes away from the back of his head with blood. He tries to rise and is hit again.

HASARI

(to the kids)

Get back! Stay back!

ASHOKA

No, no, come forward. Come.

Ashoka glides toward the petrified Amrita. The Goonda remains unmoving, watchful. Ashoka puts out his hand with its rings, and strokes Amrita's cheek.

ASHOKA

What a little woman already, hey?

HASARI

Please, don't touch her, Babu.

ASHOKA

What did you say?

HASARI

I said, Please, don't touch her.

Hasari glances over his shoulder, his eyes bouncing off the Goonda's impassive face. Now, the knife comes out of Ashoka's pocket, snaps open, glints in the light.

ASHOKA

She's going to give someone a lot of enjoyment. Yes.

(CONTINUED)
CONTINUED:

There's a moment of unbearable tension as everyone, including the Goonda, realizes this man is out of control.

ASHOKA
(to the Goonda)
He said 'please' didn't he?
'Please, don't touch her?'

The Goonda stares at Ashoka... And now Ashoka reaches out and we FOLLOW CLOSE on his hand as it moves ever so slowly through space to settle on Amrita's breast.

And now Hasari explodes. He hits Ashoka. A hard punch to the chest. Ashoka stumbles and falls to one knee.

The Two Thugs make a move to come to his rescue... but a curious thing stops them: the Goonda's arm, outstretched across their path, his eyes alerting them not to proceed. Max lurches to his feet unsteadily.

ASHOKA
Bhose, help me!

Hasari unloads a punch into Ashoka's face; Ashoka's nose pours blood; he starts to whimper. He clutches Hasari hard to him. Holds him. Hasari struggles, slams his palm into Ashoka's chin, sending Ashoka to the ground, sending the knife skidding across the ground. Hasari grabs the knife, straddles Ashoka, about to kill. But he can't do it.

HASARI
Life is hard enough. No more.
Leave us alone.

Hasari backs off, leans against a wall, stares down at Ashoka, his hands in tight against his body.

Manooj and Shambu stare at their father in awe.

Shambu sees something on the ground where the first blow was delivered to Ashoka's chest. Everyone has moved slightly to one side. He bends and closes his fist around something.

The Goonda steps between Ashoka and Max and Hasari.

GOONDA
You won't be bothered again.

A look from the Goonda and the Thugs vanish, leaving Ashoka cowering in a doorway on his knees.

(CONTINUED)
CONTINUED:

Shutters start to open, people begin to appear again in doorways and windows. Fearing for his life, Ashoka suddenly bolts. Max is fixed on Hasari. He lets up a scream of exultation, his hand going out for a "five" from Hasari. The kids charge toward Hasari.

Then everyone freezes.

Hasari lists to his right side and blood starts to pour from the knife wound in his abdomen under his pressing arm.

EXT. MAX'S ROOM - UPSTAIRS BALCONY - NIGHT

From here we can see Hasari on Max's cot under "The Raft of the Medusa" in the little room overlooking the street. Out here, the two doctors are alone.

MAX

Why don't you go on home. I'll stay with him.

Sunil nods. Max grips Sunil's hand strongly. Sunil goes down the steps. Max moves to Hasari's bedside. He watches Hasari breathing. He looks up at "The Raft of the Medusa."

INT. MAX'S ROOM - NIGHT (SEVERAL HOURS LATER)

A thin stream of dawn light coming through the half-closed shutters.

FROM HERE - THE BALCONY

Through the open door, we can just see Joan, praying quietly. Close around her, Anouar, Meeta, Surya, Margareta, Poomina...

THE ROOM

Beneath "The Raft of the Medusa," Hasari Pal speaks to his family and Max, Aloka sitting close to the bed, the Children on the bed beside their father, and Max standing close.

(CONTINUED)
CONTINUED:

HASARI
A man's journey to the end of his obligations is a very long road. And you have to remember that you can never give up. We pray that life will bless us, that we will be kings, with possessions and money that we can rule over all around us. But it's a mist; the only thing that makes it possible to endure life is our love, one for the other.

A beat, the family and Max tightly bound together. And now we hear the dim sounds of RICKSHAW BELLS.

HASARI
I was dreaming the sound of rickshaw bells, and now I hear them.

Max opens the windows. Manooj helps his father sit up.

COURTYARD - THEIR POV

Outside, there are rickshaw pullers filling the courtyard and spilling out into the street. When the window opens, all the Pullers start ringing their bells and the room is full of their music.

HASARI
Are they here for me?

Unquestionably, they are.

HASARI
A city so big. When we arrived, we didn't have a place to live, a friend.

He smiles.

OUTSIDE

The many hands with their ringing bells.

CLOSE ON WINDOW

The tiny figure of Shambu joins Max in the window. Max bends close.

(CONTINUED)
CONTINUED:

SHAMBU
(whispering)
Is my father going to die?

Max makes the same sound he made in the ashram at the beginning of the movie, though this sound of dismissal different.

MAX
Get serious.

INT. RAM'S HUT - HASARI'S FACE - DAY

Hasari mirrors Max's expression of dismissal!

HASARI
Get serious! I've agreed to the bicycle, I've agreed to the 1000 rupees! I can go no further. I have nothing more to give!

OUTSIDE THE HUT

Everyone crowded around the door. From within, we DIMLY HEAR the negotiations continue. Max approaches from the clinic. Shambu slips down the steps from above as...

MAX
How's it going?

RAM
All that stands between them now is the ounce of gold. Max Daddah, Joan Di -- is she a good reader?

MAX
What do you mean?

RAM
She read this letter to me.
( he shows Max)
But I think she must have read it wrong. She said my wife writes that irrigation has come to our village.

MAX
But that's great.

(CONTINUED)
CONTINUED:

RAM
But it means I should go home to my wife.

MAX
I thought that's why we've been writing all these letters.

RAM
Yes, of course, I love her from here, yes; but, what if I go home and find I don't love her from there.

Shambu takes him by the hand and tugs him quickly to the edge of the tea shop. The little boy indicates Max should bend close. Max leans down.

SHAMBU
Daddy needs gold, right?

Max nods. And Shambu brings his fist up from under the table.

CLOSE ON SHAMBU'S HAND
He opens his hand to disclose what he scooped off the ground during the fight: Max's necklace and Hebrew letter.

SHAMBU
Do you think this is pretend gold or real?

MAX AND SHAMBU
Max stares at the little boy's hopeful face.

INT. PAL'S ROOM - FLOWER
We see the fully blossomed flower in the tea caddy and then Hasari's fingers come INTO THE FRAME. He carefully snips the flower free of its stalk.

ANOTHER ANGLE
Amrita is dressed in the beautiful sari her father bought her. Father and daughter are alone. He hands her the flower and adjusts her veil tenderly.

(CONTINUED)
CONTINUED:

HASARI
You never did belong to me. You
were only lent to me by God until
you marry and continue the wheel
of life.

Amrita stares at her loving father and slowly her arms
come up around his neck, the flower against his curved
back. Tears fill Hasari's eyes, but a smile graces his
lips.

EXT. SQUARE - DAY - EARLY EVENING

The procession to the courtyard begins when a BRASS BAND
strikes up, accompanied by singing and shouting. Tiny
lights have been strung over the street. We see Max and
Manubai. Margareta and a group of children. Joan with
Poomina. Anour, Meeta, Said. Everyone who's become part
of the family is present.

EXT. CLINIC COURTYARD - DAY (DUSK)

The procession arrives and enters. Smoke from the chu-
las. Light from a half dozen lamps.

Subash and his procession make their entrance. A ritual
veil is fixed to Subash's face. The Pujari waves for
Hasari to come to his place. Hasari turns to Max.

HASARI
I would be pleased if you would
stand with me in the place of
honor to the right of my daughter.

Deeply touched, Max nods... and the two men step for-
ward... as Subash is motioned forward by the Pujari.
Subash sits beside Amrita.

THE CEREMONY

A flame. The shyness of bride and groom as the ceremony
proceeds with the winding of the red thread. Hasari
looks on with unspeakable pride, Max beside him. We see
the faces of all our family again: Aloka, Manooj and
Shambu, Joan, Poomina, Surya, Selima, Aristotle John,
etc.
THE WHEEL

Turning. As Amrita and Subash, joined by the thread, circle the flame... as we PULL BACK AND UP. Now we see the clinic and school and the surrounding area, the alleys full of people and activity. As we continue to PULL BACK, we see the entirety of the City of Joy and then beyond -- Calcutta, its teeming streets -- life continuing as the sun sets against an infinite sky and we ROLL END CREDITS.

FADE OUT.

THE END