

INT. PIZZA PARLOR - DAY

The BELL above the wooden door JANGLES.

A neighborhood joint, frozen in the 80s. Sunlight filters through nicotine-stained windows.

SUPER: KANSAS CITY, KANSAS - 2017

A PINBALL MACHINE CLACKS.

Four men in dark suits settle into a corner booth.

FRANK (61), old-school, composed. He checks his watch, removes a crumpled pack of Lucky Strikes from his jacket.

Taps one loose. Places it between his lips. He lights up.

A ritual. Not a habit.

VINNY (43), pure impulse, no filter. He tears open a Parmesan packet and pours it straight into his mouth.

EDDIE (47), polished and Southern, admires his Elvis-inspired pompadour in the chrome of the napkin dispenser.

SLOAN (55), reserved and analytical, works a crossword beside a glass of Tab packed with crushed ice.

Vinny mid-rant.

VINNY

I'm telling you, Cinnamon Toast
Crunch isn't cereal.

Eddie looks at him.

Shakes two antacids into his palm.

EDDIE

It's breakfast, Vin

Vinny wipes Parmesan dust from his lip.

VINNY

No. It's sugar that went to therapy
and came back with structure.

Sloan looks up from his crossword.

Then at his immaculate fingernails.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

SLOAN

Four letters. A sign of poor judgment.

EDDIE

Vinny.

VINNY

That's five, Eddie. Try to keep up.

SLOAN

He's numerically challenged.

EDDIE

Says the guy drinking Tab.

SLOAN

Some of us have restraint.

EDDIE

No. Some of us have taste.

VINNY

Elvis ate fried peanut butter sandwiches with bananas.

FRANK

Enough.

Silence.

Eddie and Sloan exchange a look.

Frank reaches for the sugar packets. Straightens them perfectly in a row.

Vinny watches.

VINNY

You still do that, Frankie?

FRANK

Old habit.

Frank taps the last packet into line.

Looks up, locking eyes with Vinny.

FRANK

I put things where they belong, and I expect them to stay there.

Vinny's grin fades.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

His fingers go still on an unopened Parmesan packet.

VINNY

You ever fix something that wasn't broken?

(beat)

Then find out you made it worse.

Frank studies Vinny, unblinking.

He reaches into his jacket and pulls out a small, black-leather notebook.

Its spine is creased, edges worn smooth by years of handling.

He licks his thumb. Flips to a fresh page.

Neat, surgical columns of dates and initials.

Frank unclips a mechanical pencil from his pocket, clicks it once, and writes a single digit in the blank margin: 2.

Sloan watches the lead drag across the paper.

SLOAN

Another infraction?

Frank snaps the notebook shut.

FRANK

Second time I know about.

SLOAN

Pattern recognition is a terrible thing to ignore.

Frank looks up, locking eyes with Vinny.

FRANK

I don't give a damn what you meant, Vincent. I care what you did.

Vinny looks to Frank.

VINNY

You always were good at making a guy feel welcome.

FRANK

Somebody had to keep you in line.

VINNY

I remember sneaking your Playboys out of the closet.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (3)

Frank almost smiles.

VINNY

Miss July '87. I thought I was in love. Didn't even know what love was. But, man... she was something.

FRANK

Your mother would've sent me straight to hell without a trial.

VINNY

Hell's just a family reunion with worse AC, Frankie.

(beat)

She knew I had 'em, too. Said a boy's gotta learn to break in a mattress somehow

FRANK

That was your father talking through her.

Frank's expression hardens. He taps his ash into the tray—slow, methodical.

FRANK

Your old man had a lot of crazy ideas about what you needed to learn.

VINNY

Yeah, well... I ever find the bastard who cut him down, I'm tearing him apart with my bare hands.

Frank studies him. Doesn't blink.

FRANK

I know you're raw, kid. You got a right to be. But he made choices. Choices that put good people in bad spots.

VINNY

You sound like you were there, Frank.

FRANK

He was looking for trouble. And he found it.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (4)

VINNY

That don't mean—

Frank snubs out his cigarette, grinding it flat into the glass.

FRANK

Discussion closed. We're not here
to reminisce.

Sloan dabs the base of his nostril with a white silk handkerchief.

Vinny notices.

VINNY

Ragweed?

Sloan lowers the handkerchief.

A small smear of fresh crimson marks the white silk.

Sloan studies the stain.

Then folds it into a clean square, hiding the blood, and slips it back into his breast pocket.

VINNY

You good, Sloan?

SLOAN

Never better.

He returns to his crossword.

A WAITRESS (30s), sharp-eyed and casually confident, approaches with a tired smile.

WAITRESS

Look at you boys dressed all in
black. Funeral or a court
appearance?

VINNY

Depends, sweetheart. Got any
righteous clarity back there?

WAITRESS

Just beer. I leave the revelations
to the clergy.

Vinny grins.