

AUDITION SIDE ONE

RED emerges, slouches low-key through the activity, worn cap on his head, exchanging hellos and doing minor business. He's an important man here. As all this is happening, RED's voice-over is heard.

RED. There's a con like me in every prison, I guess. I'm the guy who can get it for you. Cigarettes, a bag of reefer if you're partial, a bottle of brandy to celebrate your kid's high school graduation. Damn near anything, within reason. *(He slips somebody a pack of smokes, smooth sleight-of-hand.)* Yes, sir, I'm a regular Sears & Roebuck. I've been here most of my adult life. The Shank, as we call it, was built a hundred and fifty years ago and is Maine's oldest prison. It's overcrowded, antiquated, and rat-infested... and most of them are walking around in uniform. Violence and corruption is rife in every nook and cranny, it's what makes the rotten heart of this place beat.

AUDITION SIDE TWO

TWO SHORT SIREN BLASTS issue from the main tower, drawing everybody's attention forward. The sound of gates swinging open...revealing Chief guard BRYAN HADLEY and second guard MERT ENTWISTLE enter, flanking ANDY, RICO, and PINKY dressed only in boxers, carrying with them their bundles of prison clothes. The CONS shout and jeer at them, like animals.)

ROOSTER. Ooooh my oh my, we got some new fresh cracks in the joint. *(This receives a loud, raucous cheer from the CONS. They rattle and bang.)*

BOGS. Jesus! Look at those white-bottomed killers. I ain't gonna sleep tonight!

DAWKINS. I love the smell of fresh fish. I'm taking bets on who will piss his pants first!

ROOSTER. Yeah. Your scaly ass is mine little fishy, dead or alive! *(The jeering subsides as a guard appears with his rifle poised.)*

RED (V.O.). So, when Andy Dufresne came to me in 1949 and asked me to smuggle Rita Hayworth into the prison for him, I told him no problem. And it wasn't.

HADLEY. Return to your cellblocks for evening count.

The new fish stay on stage as the other CONS exit. ERTWHISTLE unlocks the handcuffs.

HADLEY. Eyes front.

WARDEN SAMUEL NORTON enters the stage and strolls forth, a colourless man in a grey suit and a church pin in his lapel. He carries a leather-bound Bible. He looks like he could piss ice water. He appraises the newcomers with flinty eyes.

NORTON. This is Mr. Hadley, captain of the guard. I am Mr. Norton, the warden. You are sinners and scum. That's why they sent you to me. Rule number one: no blaspheming. I'll not have the Lord's name taken in vain in my prison. The other rules you'll figure out as you go along. Any questions?

PINKY. When do we eat?

Cued by Norton's glance, Hadley steps up to PINKY's and screams right in his face:

HADLEY. You eat when we say you eat! You piss when we say you piss! You shit when we say you shit! You sleep when we say you sleep! You maggot-dick motherfucker!

Hadley rams the tip of his club into PINKY's belly. He falls to his knees, gasping and clutching himself. Hadley takes his place at Norton's side again.

NORTON. *(Softly)* Any other questions? *(There are none.)* I believe in two things. Discipline and the Bible. Here, you'll receive both. *(holds up a Bible)* Put your faith in the Lord. Your ass belongs to me. Welcome to Shawshank.

HADLEY. Off with them clothes! First man into the shower!

Lights fade with cells locked in with a CLANG OF STEEL.

AUDITION SIDE THREE

BOGS. You decided to open with the Sicilian defence . . . that turned out to be a smart opening... Lets your queen venture out if she wants, huh... Yeah, you let that bitch do a lot of damage... seems to be a weakness of yours, letting your women do what they want... I want to know something...

ANDY. What's that?

BOGS. I want to know why you want to purchase a pickaxe.

ANDY. I have no idea what you're talking about. I don't want any trouble. I'm not a violent man.

(ROOSTER and PINKY suddenly appear.)

ROOSTER. Sure, you ain't... blowing your wife and her lover's brains out... that was just to scare them off, huh?

PINKY. *(Laughing and shooting with his fingers:)* Bam bam! Here comes the banker man!

BOGS. What were you planning to do with it? Talk to me.

(BOGS walks closer to ANDY. ANDY suddenly lashes out and catches BOGS with a right uppercut. The punch knocks BOGS back on his heels. ROOSTER jumps on ANDY. We see BOGS pull a cutthroat razor from his belt. The blade glints in the half-light.)

BOGS. You asked Red to get you a pickaxe – why would Red tell me something like that?

ANDY. I... dunno...

(BOGS positions himself behind ANDY, starts to pull down his pants.

ROOSTER holds ANDY tightly by the hair, punching him occasionally when he tries to fight. All we can see is ANDY's face, twisted and bloody in the half-light.)

BOGS. You listen to me, banker boy... when the chess game is over... no matter who wins... the pawn and the king go back in the same box.... so you gotta learn who the king is around here... Who's the king, huh?... Who's the fuckin' king?

(Lights fade to black and we hear the muffled screams and pain of ANDY. Lights come back up and ANDY is thrown on the floor like a rag doll. BOGS and ROOSTER exit. HADLEY enters with a flashlight, shines it over ANDY's dishevelled body. Fade down.

AUDITION SIDE FOUR

Fade up to a new, fully stocked library. The shelves are loaded with books from wall to ceiling. PINKY, RICO, RED, BOGS, ROOSTER, and DAWKINS are crowded around listening to the song on Dawkins' radio. They sing along and mess around. ROOSTER grabs RICO and drags him around by the arm.

ROOSTER. Man I love these English faggots!

RED. I preferred the Isley Brothers version!

RICO. That's 'cos you're an old man! Ooooooh I'm gone baby yeahhh!

BOGS. Come on, Rico, Twist!

CONS. And Shout!

ROOSTER. Doing good, Rico, getting the hang of it now. (ROOSTER *grabs RICO by the arm and swings him around.*)

RICO. Ahh shit man! Ow! You trin' pull the arm outta its socket!

(ANDY and BROOKSIE enter. BROOKSIE is much older and slower. The years haven't been kind to him.)

BROOKSIE. What in Jesus' name is going on in here? Turn that racket off – jumping 'round like screaming schoolgirls! Where the hell do you think you are? This is the library! Can't you read the sign...

RICO. We took it down!

BROOKSIE. Get to hell outta here, you bunch of losers. Khrushchev is right! You do need a goddam nuclear missile up your ass.

ROOSTER. Best thing that could happen to this place. (*Everyone exits. BOGS and ROOSTER target ANDY on their exit.*)

BROOKSIE. Go on, get out!

BOGS. I liked it better when it was a paint store.

ROOSTER. Me too. I used to get high on that stuff.

(BOGS and ROOSTER exit. ANDY goes to his desk. BROOKSIE looks around the shelves, picks up a new hardback book, opens it gently and smells it, turns it fondly in his hand, his breathing becomes agitated.)

ANDY. Brooksie... you okay?

BROOKSIE. I've... never been better... Look at this place, it's a miracle. I'm up for parole in a few months. Won't be long 'til you have the place to yourself.

ANDY. (*Smiles:*) I'm going to miss you, Brooksie.

BROOKSIE. Yeah, yeah... sure you will... you've put Raymond Chandler in the D section?

(ANDY *turns, looks at the shelf.*)

ANDY. So I did. Sorry boss.

BROOKSIE. Christ Almighty.

(BROOKSIE *exits.*)

RED *and the CONS are opening boxes, pulling out books.*

RED (V.O.). You'd be amazed how far Andy could stretch it. He made deals with book clubs, charity groups...he bought remaindered books by the pound...

DAWKINS. Treasure Island. Robert Louis...

ANDY. (*jotting*) ...Stevenson. Next?

RED. I got here an auto repair manual, and a book on soap carving.

ANDY. Trade skills and hobbies, those go under educational. Stack right behind you.

DAWKINS. The Count of Monte Crisco...

RICO. Cristo, you dumbshit.

DAWKINS. ...by Alexandre Dumb ass.

ANDY. Dumas. You boys'll like that one. It's about a prison break.

RICO *tries to take the book.* DAWKINS *yanks it back.* I saw it first. RED *shoots ANDY a look.*

RED. Maybe that should go under educational too.

AUDITION SIDE FIVE

ANDY moves to prison dayroom/yard as RED enters.

RED. Got his fingers in a lot of pies, from what I hear.

ANDY. What you hear isn't half of it. He's got scams you haven't dreamed of. Kickbacks on his kickbacks. There's a river of dirty money flowing through this place.

RED. Money like that can be a problem. Sooner or later you gotta explain where it came from.

ANDY. That's where I come in. I channel it, funnel it, filter it...stocks, securities, tax free municipals... I send that money out into the big world. And when it comes back...

RED. It's clean as a virgin's whistle?

ANDY. Cleaner. By the time Norton retires, I will have made him a millionaire.

RED. Jesus. They ever catch on, he's gonna wind up wearing a number himself.

ANDY. (*smiles*) I thought you had more faith in me than that.

RED. I'm sure you're good, but all that paper leaves a trail. Anybody gets too curious -- FBI, IRS, whatever -- that trail's gonna lead to somebody.

ANDY. Sure, it will. But not to the warden, and certainly not to me.

RED. Who then?

ANDY. Peter Stevens.

RED. Who?

ANDY. The silent, silent partner. He's the guilty one, your Honor. The man with the bank accounts. That's where the filtering process starts. They trace it back, all they're gonna find is him.

RED. Yeah, okay, but who the hell is he?

ANDY. A phantom. An apparition. Second cousin to Harvey the Rabbit. (*off RED's look*) I conjured him out of thin air. He doesn't exist...except on paper.

RED. You can't just make a person up.

ANDY. Sure you can, if you know how the system works, and where the cracks are. It's amazing what you can accomplish by mail. Mr. Stevens has a birth certificate, social security card, driver's license. They ever track those accounts; they'll wind up chasing a figment of my imagination.

RED. Jesus. Did I say you were good? You're Rembrandt.

ANDY. It's funny. On the outside, I was an honest man. Straight as an arrow. I had to come to prison to be a crook.

RED. Does it ever bother you?

ANDY. I don't run the scams, Red, I just process the profits. That's a fine line, maybe. But I've also built that library and used it to help a dozen guys get their high school diplomas. Why do you think the warden lets me do all that?

RED. To keep you happy doing the laundry. Money instead of sheets.

ANDY. I work cheap. That's the trade-off.

AUDITION SIDE SIX

TOMMY WILLIAMS, *a young con in his early twenties, is on the communal payphone attached to the wall. HADLEY stands guard. ROOSTER, BOGS, and RICO wait in line, anxious to get their chance. TOMMY is talking to his wife. It's not the place to get romantic. TOMMY has the phone cradled to his ear. DAWKINS, RED, and BROOKSIE sit opposite, playing cards.*

TOMMY. I swear to God, honey, I'm done with those guys.

ROOSTER. Oh no, you're not!

TOMMY. I'm goin' back to night school. Do my exams.

(BOGS and ROOSTER laugh sarcastically.)

PINKY. *(To ROOSTER and BOGS:)* I'll sharpen your pencil for you!

DAWKINS. Even money, he tells her he loves her!

TOMMY. I hear you . . . I promise . . . I love you, baby.

DAWKINS. Bam! How good am I?

(The guys laugh.)

BOGS. I love you, bay-bee!

RICO. Come on now, leave the boy in peace.

ROOSTER. I'll cut a piece outta you, Jesus freak.

RICO. God bless you, too.

TOMMY. Give my little girl a kiss for me. Bye, honey.

ROOSTER. Put the phone on the hook, little fishy!

(TOMMY hangs up.)

HADLEY. Alright, that's it, phone time's up!

BOGS. Ah come on, that streak-a piss has used up everybody's time!

HADLEY. I said that's it! Now move your ass! Like you got somebody to call!

(The CONS moan. BOGS and the Sisters glare at TOMMY. RED, RICO, DAWKINS, and BROOKSIE sit in the corner playing poker. In the background, the Sisters, BOGS, ROOSTER & PINKY, are pushing TOMMY from one to the other. TOMMY is fighting back and shouting at them. RED and the boys watch with interest.)

BOGS. Come on, don't get angry, sweet thing. Uncle Bogs just wants to treat you nice.

TOMMY. I ain't your sweet thing, you goddamned faggot!

BOGS. Oh, you will be.

ROOSTER. Yeah, gonna invade you like a disease!

(PINKY laughs.)

TOMMY. You stay the fuck away from me, you freak!

BOGS. That boy has a filthy mouth. I like that!

(ENTWISTLE enters and steps in between them.)

ENTWISTLE. Alright, that's enough! Break it up, new boy! Move along!

(TOMMY walks down to the poker game.)

TOMMY. Got room for one more?

DAWKINS. Yeah. We'll take anybody's money!

TOMMY. *(To BOGS:)* Fuck you, old man!

(TOMMY takes a seat and gets dealt a hand by RICO.)

BROOKSIE. You wanna take it easy with those guys, kid.

TOMMY. I ain't worried 'bout those bastards. Nothing I can't handle.

(RED looks around at all the guys. They smile.)

RED. Hmm... Now, where have we heard that before?

RICO. What's your name, kid?

TOMMY. Tommy. Tommy Williams from South Carolina. Best goddamn car thief in the business.

RICO. Long name.

DAWKINS. You're so good, how come you ended up in the Shank?

TOMMY. I got double-crossed.

DAWKINS. Ahh, me too!

RED. You too?

DAWKINS. Yeah, lawyer screwed me.

RED. Musta had the same lawyer.

DAWKINS. Yeah

(The guys all tease him by pointing at each other with mock shock that they were all double-crossed as well.)

TOMMY. Soon as I git outta here, I'm working alone, that's the key!

RICO. Hold on. I thought you just said you wanted to pass your high school exams?

TOMMY. That was a private conversation!

BROOKSIE. Nothing private in this place, kid.

RED. You gotta learn to keep your voice down. So, do you?

TOMMY. What?

RED. Wanna finish your exams?

TOMMY. Yeah... Yeah, I do.

RED. Good. In that case, I can put you in touch with our head of education. (*A horn sounds. As the CONS exit, they clear all the tables and chairs.*)

AUDITION SIDE SEVEN

(DAWKINS *rush in with ANDY and RED at his heels. They find RICO and PINKY trying to calm BROOKSIE, who has ROOSTER in a chokehold and a knife to his throat. ROOSTER is terrified.*)

PINKY. C'mon, Brooksie, why don't you just calm the fuck down, okay?

BROOKSIE. Goddamn miserable puke-eatin' sons of whores! *(He kicks a table over. Tax files explode through the air.)*

RED. What the hell's going on?

RICO. You tell me, man. One second, he was fine, then out came the knife. I better get the guards.

RED. No. We'll handle this. Ain't that right, Brooks? Just settle down and we'll talk about it, okay?

BROOKSIE. Nothing left to talk about! It's all talked out! Nothing left now but to cut his fuckin' throat!

RED. Why? What's Rooster done to you?

BROOKSIE. That's what they want! It's the price I gotta pay!

(Andy steps forward, rivets Brooks with a gaze. Softly.)

ANDY. Brooks, you're not going to hurt Rooster, we all know that. Even Rooster knows it, right, Rooster?

ROOSTER. *(nods, terrified)* Sure. I know that. Sure.

ANDY. Why? Ask anyone, they'll tell you. Brooks Hatlen is a reasonable man.

RED. *(cuing nods all around)* Yeah, that's right. That's what everybody says.

ANDY. You're not fooling anybody, so just put the damn knife down and stop scaring the shit out of people.

BROOKSIE. But it's the only way they'll let me stay.

(Brooks bursts into tears. The storm is over. Rooster staggers free, gasping for air. ANDY takes the knife, passes it to RED. BROOKSIE dissolves into ANDY's arms with great heaving sobs.)

ANDY. Take it easy. You'll be all right.

ROOSTER. Him? What about me? Crazy old fool! Goddamn near slit my throat!

RED. You've had worse from shaving... What'd you do to set him off?

ROOSTER. Nothin'! Just came in to say fare-thee-well. *(off their looks)* Ain't you heard? His parole came through!

(RED and ANDY exchange a surprised look. ANDY wants to understand. RED just motions to let it be for now. He puts his arm around BROOKSIE, who sobs inconsolably.)

RED *speaks softly as he leads BROOKSIE off.*)

RED. Ain't that bad, old hoss. Won't be long till you're squiring pretty young girls on your arm and telling 'em lies.

AUDITION SIDE EIGHT

ANDY is seated opposite NORTON at his desk. NORTON is staring at him with a look of incredulity.)

NORTON. Well. I have to say, that's the most amazing story I ever heard. What amazes me most is you were taken in by it.

ANDY. Sir?

NORTON. It's obvious this fellow Williams is impressed with you. He hears your tale of woe and quite naturally wants to cheer you up. He's young, not terribly bright. Not surprising he didn't know what a state he'd put you in.

ANDY. I think he's telling the truth.

NORTON. Let's say for a moment Blatch does exist. You think he'd just fall to his knees and cry, "Yes, I did it! I confess! By all means, please add a life term to my sentence!"

ANDY. It wouldn't matter. With Tommy's testimony, I can get a new trial.

NORTON. That's assuming Blatch is even still there. Chances are excellent he'd be released by now. Excellent.

ANDY. They'd have his last known address. Names of relatives...(NORTON *shakes his head*) Well it's a chance. Isn't it? How can you be so obtuse?

NORTON. What? What did you call me?

ANDY. Obtuse! Is it deliberate? The country club will have his old timecards! W-2s with his name on them!

NORTON. (*rises*) Dufresne, if you want to indulge this fantasy, that's your business. Don't make it mine. This meeting's over.

ANDY. Look, if it's the squeeze, don't worry. I'd never say what goes on in here. I'd be just as indictable as you for laundering the money!

AUDITION SIDE NINE

Prison Yard - Nighttime

TOMMY. Out here?

ERTWISTLE. That's what the man said.

(ERTWISTLE swings the gate open, sends TOMMY through, turns and heads back inside. The place is deserted. He stops, sensing a presence.)

TOMMY. Hello? Warden?

(NORTON steps into the light. NORTON puts his hand in his inside pocket and pulls out an envelope. Holds it up.)

NORTON. I have your exam results here.

(NORTON gives him an envelope. TOMMY opens it slowly and reads the letter, he is stunned.)

TOMMY. Holy shit... I passed?... Says here I passed... I did it... I did it... Andy said I would, I didn't believe him, not for a minute! Can I call my wife?

NORTON. Of course, you can use the phone in my office anytime. Take as long as you like. *(A beat.)* Tommy, we've got a situation here. I think you can appreciate that.

TOMMY. Yes, sir, I sure can.

NORTON. I tell you, son, this really came along and knocked the wind out of me. It's got me up nights, that's the truth. *(NORTON pulls a pack of cigarettes, offers TOMMY a smoke. TOMMY takes one. NORTON lights both cigarettes, pockets his lighter.)* The right decision. Sometimes it's hard to figure out what that is. You understand? *(TOMMY nods)* Think hard, Tommy. If I'm gonna move on this, there can't be the least little shred of doubt. I have to know if you what you told Dufresne was the truth.

TOMMY. Yes sir. Absolutely.

NORTON. Would you be willing to swear before a judge and jury...having placed your hand on the Good Book and taken an oath before Almighty God Himself?

TOMMY. Just gimme that chance.

NORTON. That's what I thought.

AUDITION SIDE TEN

ANDY finds RED sitting in the shadow of the high stone wall, poking listlessly through the dust for small pebbles. ANDY waits for some acknowledgment. RED doesn't even look up. ANDY hunkers down and joins him. Nothing is said for the longest time. And then Andy pulls a small box from his sweater, hands it to RED.

ANDY. Anniversary gift. Open it.

(RED does. Inside the box, on a thin layer of cotton, is a shiny new harmonica, bright aluminium and circus-red.)

ANDY. Had to go through one of your competitors. Hope you don't mind. Wanted it to be a surprise.

RED. It's very pretty, Andy. Thank you.

ANDY. You gonna play something?

(RED considers it, shakes his head.)

RED. (Softly) Not today.

ANDY. My wife used to say I'm a hard man to know. Like a closed book. Complained about it all the time. (pause) She was beautiful. I loved her. But I guess I couldn't show it enough. (softly) I killed her, Red. (ANDY finally glances at RED, seeking a reaction. Silence.) I didn't pull the trigger. But I drove her away. That's why she died. Because of me, the way I am.

RED. That don't make you a murderer. Bad husband, maybe. (ANDY smiles faintly in spite of himself. RED gives his shoulder a squeeze.) Feel bad about it if you want. But you didn't pull the trigger.

ANDY. No. I didn't. Someone else did, and I wound up here. Bad luck, I guess.

RED. Bad luck? Jesus.

ANDY. It floats around. Has to land on somebody. Say a storm comes through. Some folks sit in their living rooms and enjoy the rain. The house next door gets torn out of the ground and smashed flat. It was my turn, that's all. I was in the path of the tornado. (softly) I just had no idea the storm would go on as long as it has. (glances to him) Think you'll ever get out of here?

RED. Sure. When I got a long white beard and about three marbles left rolling around upstairs.

ANDY. Tell you where I'd go. Zihuantanejo.

RED. Zihuantanejo?

ANDY. Mexico. Little place right on the Pacific. You know what the Mexicans say about the Pacific? They say it has no memory. That's where I'd like to finish out my life, Red. A warm place with no memory. Open a little hotel right on the beach. Buy some worthless old boat and fix it up like new. Take my guests out charter fishing. (beat) You know, a place like that, I'd need a man who can get things. (RED stares and

ANDY, *laughs.*)

RED. Jesus, Andy. I couldn't hack it on the outside. Been in here too long. I'm an institutional man now. Like old Brooks Hatlen was.

ANDY. You underestimate yourself.

RED. Bullshit. In here, I'm the guy who can get it for you. Out there, all you need are Yellow Pages. I wouldn't know where to begin. (*derisive snort*) Pacific Ocean? Hell. Like to scare me to death, somethin' that big.

ANDY. Not me. I didn't shoot my wife, and I didn't shoot her lover, and whatever mistakes I made, I've paid for and then some. That hotel and that boat...I don't think it's too much to want. To look at the stars just after sunset. Touch the sand. Wade in the water. Feel free.

RED. Goddamn it, Andy, stop! Don't do that to yourself! Talking shitty pipedreams! Mexico's down there, and you're in here, and that's the way it is!

ANDY. You're right. It's down there, and I'm in here. I guess it comes down to a simple choice, really. Get busy living or get busy dying.

(RED *snaps a look. What the hell does that mean?* ANDY *rises and walks away. RED lunges to his feet.*)

RED. Andy?

ANDY. (*turns back*) Red, if you ever get out of here, do me a favour. There's this big hayfield up near Buxton. You know where Buxton is?

RED. (*nods*) Lots of hayfields there.

ANDY. One in particular. Got a long rock wall with a big oak at the north end. Like something out of a Robert Frost poem. It's where I asked my wife to marry me. We'd gone for a picnic. We made love under that tree. I asked and she said yes. (*beat*) Promise me, Red. If you ever get out, find that spot. In the base of that wall, you'll find a rock that has no earthly business in a Maine hayfield. A piece of black volcanic glass. You'll find something buried under it, I want you to have.

RED. What? What's buried there?

ANDY. You'll just have to pry up that rock and see.

Andy turns and walks away.

AUDITION SIDE ELEVEN

ANDY. "Dear Red, if you're reading this, you've gotten out. And if you've followed along this far, you might be willing to come a little further. I think you remember the name of the town, don't you? I could use a good man to help me get my project on wheels. I'll keep an eye out for you and the chessboard ready. *(beat)* Remember, Red. Hope is a good thing, maybe the best of things, and no good thing ever dies. I will be hoping that this letter finds you, and finds you well. Your friend. Andy."