

Robbers Who Rob Things (Draft 2)

BY: Mason

CHARACTERS

Frankie

Buster

Dinah

SETTING

New York City, 1970s

SCENE 1

A sleazy bar, dirty and in rough shape. Tables and chairs knocked over, moths tapping on the lights hung from the ceiling, and smooth jazz plays on a machine in the corner. The bar is empty except for FRANKIE, who is going over some notes in his hands.

FRANKIE: “And so that is why I believe I should be entitled to an extension on my property payments. I know such a grand and powerful bank must hear stories like mine on the daily. But if you could just look deep into your hearts...” ...no...

FRANKIE erases some of the lines on the notes and rewrites it

FRANKIE: “If you could look deep within the confines of your soul, I think you’ll find I’m truly worth it...”

FRANKIE takes a moment to think over the notes

FRANKIE: Maybe I could gain more sympathy points if I had a wheelchair.

Suddenly, BUSTER walks in through the door, wearing a zoot suit. He’s flipping a coin in hand with a toothpick in his mouth—the epitome of a gangster.

FRANKIE: No. Out.

BUSTER: Hey Frankie! My friend. My close dear friend. Practically a brother. You know, I was just sitting at home thinking about how it’s been way too long since I stopped in. Did you get a haircut? New shirt? No, I got it, new nose! That’s got to be a new nose. There’s no way you ever smelled as good as you do now.

FRANKIE: Let me guess. You want something?

BUSTER: Oh, come on, Frankie. Can't an old friend just come in his finest slacks with a pep in his step and song in his heart to see how his childhood chum is doing?

The pair sit in silence for a moment

BUSTER: BUT since you brought it up...

FRANKIE: Forget it.

BUSTER: Oh, come on, it isn't like I'm asking for much.

FRANKIE: Yeah? How "not much" are we talking about here?

BUSTER: Oh well, it's no biggie...if you could just lend me about...\$6...

FRANKIE: \$6, huh? Well, I guess that's not so bad.

BUSTER: Actually, it has about three more sixes at the end of that...

FRANKIE: \$6000?!

BUSTER: You know if it's not too much trouble...

FRANKIE: Busty, I have my own set of money problems I need to get solved. I'm not in the kind of place where I can be handing out that much.

BUSTER: What if I told you the money was for something important?

FRANKIE: It's always for something important, but never for something necessary.

BUSTER: You don't understand...RR Mioni has a new suit coming out at the end of the week...

FRANKIE: A suit? You want to pay \$6000 for a suit? You ARE out of your mind. Isn't that a little steep?

BUSTER: But steep is exactly the reason I need to get it! RR is the prime suit maker in the country. He makes one every four years and sells less than fifty of them at a time. Do you understand the kind of respect a person can command with one of those? I don't have to be seen as the useless one anymore. In my circle of co-workers, that's just the kind of thing I need to take me to a new level.

FRANKIE: You already command plenty of respect. You don't need some suit for that.

BUSTER: Frankie, all the crime bosses went to Vegas the other night and they made me stay here so I could count how many bricks made up our building.

FRANKIE: Okay, fair enough. But I still can't Buster. I was willing to do it when we were younger to be kind, but I can't feed your habits anymore.

BUSTER: How long have you known me? When have I ever left you in the dark when it comes to change? You know I'm always good for it.

FRANKIE: Buster, your IOUs have only been good for keeping my coffee table from wobbling.

BUSTER: Okay, so maybe I do owe a few bucks. But it can't be that much. I think you're exaggerating how much I've asked from you.

FRANKIE: Alright Buster, I'll tell you what. If you pay back every dime you owe me right now, then I will let you take from me as much as you want.

BUSTER: Sounds fair. So, what, it's got to be like \$5 or \$10?

FRANKIE pulls out a comically long piece of paper from his pocket

FRANKIE: More in the realm of \$11,000.

BUSTER sits stunned in a moment of silent disbelief

BUSTER: I see. Well, I'll tell you what. You just hand me the money I'm asking for and I'll return here tomorrow with that pronto.

FRANKIE: Didn't you say in your own words that it sounded fair I be paid upfront?

BUSTER: Yes, I suppose I did say something like that. What do you say to a payment plan? I give you a couple bucks tonight and then in a month I'll give you another couple bucks.

FRANKIE: So, I can be paid back in 2400? How about you give me all my money while I'm still alive?

BUSTER: You know they say friendship is the only compensation a man ever really needs...

FRANKIE: You don't have it, do you?

BUSTER: Not a dime.

FRANKIE: Didn't think so

BUSTER: Well, sheesh, when did you become such the cheapskate?

FRANKIE: Since my business got threatened with bankruptcy...

FRANKIE pulls out a red envelope from his back pocket

FRANKIE: I have a week left to pay off my debts or they're going to take it all.

BUSTER: Well... geez Frankie, I'm sorry. I had no idea business was so bad.

FRANKIE: People just aren't drinking all that much anymore. Something to do with a will to want to live longer. Until that changes, I'm running dry. You wouldn't happen to want to buy a few thousand beers to keep me in the clear, would you?

BUSTER: Unless they're on the house beers, I'm afraid I'm not really in the position to be spending much. Okay, I see now you're in no position to lend money. Why don't we do each other a favor and devise a scheme that'll get us both paid off?

FRANKIE: A scheme, huh? What did you have in mind?

BUSTER: What if we started a lemonade stand?

FRANKIE: Lemonade? Buster, you're almost 40. You'll get the cops called on us in ten minutes. Plus, it's the middle of December.

BUSTER: What if we put vodka in it?

FRANKIE: That's... honestly not that bad idea. But there's no way we'd make our quota on time with just that. What if we sold off some of the bar's stuff? Maybe it's not all shiny and new, but someone's got to have a use for these kinds of things.

BUSTER: Frankie, I mean this in the kindest way possible. No one is going to want any of this junk. It's falling apart.

FRANKIE: Oh, they're not so bad. A little paint and shine and they'll be good to...

BUSTER lightly pokes on of the stools at the bar and it completely collapses

FRANKIE: ...well maybe we could sell them for parts?

BUSTER: Frankie, there's not enough here that's going to cut it. Plus, you're going to need these kinds of things once the bar opens back up.

FRANKIE: I think you mean "if" the bar opens back up.

BUSTER: My advice? Burn it down, call your insurance company, and built it back from the ground up. Free makeover and no one has to know a thing. I also request a thinker's fee should you decide to go through with it.

FRANKIE: I can't do that Buster. I can't lose this place. My dad ran this bar for over thirty-three years. He'd spend days here and everyone in the neighborhood would only have the nicest things to say about him. I can't let it all get burned up. But then I can barely even keep standing as it is. Some son I turned out to be.

BUSTER: Hey Frankie. Your dad was always super proud of you. And I know he would be even now. Even if you can't pay it back in the end, your father would take such pride in the effort you put into trying.

FRANKIE: Thanks Buster.

BUSTER: And he would want you to dip into your savings and help your poor bud Bu...

FRANKIE: I wonder if he would want me to rip that suit off your body and take it down to the pawn shop to get a few bucks from it?

BUSTER: Alright, point taken.

FRANKIE: I can't pay my debts off in pride. I'm just going to have to go the bank tomorrow and plead for a little more time. You wouldn't happen to know somewhere you can get your hands on a free wheelchair, do you?

BUSTER: How far are you willing to go to keep this place open?

FRANKIE: I'm listening...

BUSTER: What if the two of us stuck up a bank?

FRANKIE: I've been going in and out of First National several times in the last week alone. There's no way they wouldn't recognize me.

BUSTER: Doesn't have to be the First National. Listen, I got a hot tip earlier today that there's this bank up near Doyers Street. Has some odd name. Like the "Currency Centre" or something. But people can't get enough of this place. Fellas' lineup every day for it. I don't know what's so special, but it seems to be just the break working class guys were looking for.

FRANKIE: I don't know Busty. It doesn't seem entirely fair to hit a local place who are just trying to get by like the rest of us.

BUSTER: Why not? You said it yourself; you need some money, and you need it quickly to keep your place open. In this city, you got to look out for you and your family. This is money that we can get quick. It's a simple in and out job. Then you pay off your bar and I get my RR Mioni suit. What's the issue?

FRANKIE: My father was an honest man and wouldn't have wanted to have known his place was thriving off of dirty money. And what if we get caught? Then it all would have been for nothing. I need money now, but I don't know if that's the right way to go.

BUSTER: Frankie, look around you. I don't see how you got much else of a choice. Life dealt you a bad hand of cards. You can either take the new cards by force or you can keep your cards and lose. How else do you see yourself making the money in less than a week?

FRANKIE: I'll figure something out...

FRANKIE and BUSTER sit in silence. FRANKIE begins looking around his bar. He picks up his notes and starts rummaging through them. His eyes are drawn to a picture of his father sat on the bar. He picks it up and stares at it.

FRANKIE: Okay Buster...I'm in.

BUSTER: Atta boy Frankie! I knew you still had some gangster left in you. I promise you will not regret it.

FRANKIE: I have some conditions.

BUSTER: Shoot.

FRANKIE: We split it 60/40

BUSTER: That's very kind of you to offer me 60%.

FRANKIE: I get more.

BUSTER: What? You're not being fair. Why don't we split it in half? Hell, it was my plan. Shouldn't I get more for it?

FRANKIE: I have more to lose here. The costs of my bar far exceed the cost of your suit. That's my cost.

BUSTER: What if I refuse to pay it, huh? Then we'll see how far your fees will settle.

FRANKIE: Then I guess you're just going to have to do it yourself.

BUSTER: I won't have to do it by myself. I got other friends I can ask!

FRANKIE stares at BUSTER, judgingly. BUSTER thinks for a moment.

BUSTER: 55/45

FRANKIE: 60/40

BUSTER: Deal. Anything else?

FRANKIE: No guns.

BUSTER: What? What do you mean no guns?

FRANKIE: I'm interested in getting the money, but I'm not going to put blood on my hands for it.

BUSTER: What kind of robbery doesn't have a gun? That's our intimidation factor. That's why they give us the money when we ask for it. How are we supposed to coerce them? I thought you were willing to go all the way to get this money.

FRANKIE: Even I have my limits. Weapons are too big a risk. If we do this, there can't be any risk of casualties. You'd be surprised how far the power of persuasion can go.

BUSTER: You want to talk them into giving us their money? I'm putting my suit on the line for this?

FRANKIE: Why not? I'm putting my bar. That's the tradeoff.

BUSTER: Damn, I guess you're not entirely wrong. Fine, no guns. But you better know what you're doing. Now the place will be closed on Sunday. We do it in the morning when everyone is at church. We take as much as we can carry and then we run out of there like a bat out of hell. Deal?

BUSTER reaches out for a handshake. FRANKIE thinks for a moment before taking it.

BUSTER: Deal.

SCENE 2

A clean, white waiting room. Several chairs along a table with explicit magazines laid on it. A cat poster hung on the wall saying, "you can do it!". A receptionist desk in the middle with business cards and small containers of pale liquid sat atop. A pair of glass doors on the right leading to the outside and a door on the left. DINAH is shredding various papers and tossing out the containers of semen in a panicked huff. A phone rings from offstage and DINAH heads through the left door to answer it. BUSTER and FRANKIE sneak in through the outside door wearing ski masks and carrying sacs. The pair cautiously look around.

FRANKIE: Looks like the coast is clear. Alright, I'll go to the till. You keep watch.

FRANKIE rushes over to the receptionist desk. He peers around it confused.

FRANKIE: What's with this place? Where's the tills? Where's the cash? There's not so much as a dime here.

BUSTER: Hey Frankie, check this out.

BUSTER holds up one of the dirty magazines

FRANKIE: Is that a Playboy?

BUSTER: Yeah. This is some loose bank.

FRANKIE: Weird. And check this out. They got all these small containers of white liquid. Kind of looks like...

FRANKIE pauses, realizing what's going on.

FRANKIE: Busty, what did you say the name of this bank was again?

BUSTER: Something like "Currency Centre". Why?

FRANKIE grabs one of their business cards and brings it over to Buster.

FRANKIE: What does that say on the card?

BUSTER: "Current Seed Centre".

The two look at each other, panicked.

BUSTER: This is a sperm bank!

FRANKIE: Dammit Buster, how could you not have known that beforehand? Unless one of the owners is looking to have a kid, how am I supposed to pay off my bar loans with semen?

BUSTER: Let's bail out of here. We'll recoup and discuss hitting up First National instead.

FRANKIE: I can't Buster. They'll know me the second I walk in. Plus, we don't have the time. We're just going to have to take some of these samples and try to sell them on the market.

FRANKIE and BUSTER race and grab several of the vials of semen, shoving them into their pockets and into the bags, carrying as much as they can. Suddenly DINAH enters back in.

BUSTER: Who the hell are you?

DINAH: Who are you two!?

BUSTER: We asked you first.

DINAH: Yeah, but I'm not wearing a ski mask and holding several vials of cum.

FRANKIE: We're taking these with us. And don't think of trying and stop us.

DINAH: I'm calling the cops.

BUSTER reaches in the bag and grabs a vial.

BUSTER: Take one more step and I'll smash...

BUSTER reads the label

BUSTER: Robert Redford? Like the actor?

DINAH: Wait, you didn't know this is a celebrity sperm bank?

FRANKIE: Celebrity sperm bank? Buster, some of these samples have got to be worth a fortune! Do you know how much someone would pay to be the mother or father of Robert Redford's son?

DINAH: I can't let you take those. They're property of "Current Seed" and I won't hesitate to thrash you to keep them here.

BUSTER: Oh, come on, you got to have thousands in this place. You can let go of a few to help a couple guys down on their luck.

FRANKIE: Yeah, you're big talk for a little lady.

DINAH: I was just thinking the same thing about the two of you. I noticed you don't have any guns on you. What's stopping me from calling the cops?

BUSTER peers down at his foot and notices a piece of paper.

BUSTER: What's this?

DINAH: Don't read that!

BUSTER picks up the paper and looks over it

BUSTER: Receipt for 20 gallons of milk? What does a sperm bank need with that much milk?

DINAH: Never mind that. A patient must have just left that here. Just give that to me and I'll shred that for you.

FRANKIE thinks for a moment. He opens one of the semen vials and smells it.

FRANKIE: Is this just milk?

DINAH: No, it's cum! Your nose is the one that's off. You're a man. You don't know the smell of cum. Put that down!

BUSTER: Oh well if it's nothing, why don't you call the police, and we'll show this to them. Then they can determine if this is nothing. In fact, we'll save you the trouble and head that way ourselves.

FRANKIE and BUSTER turn to head out

DINAH: Alright! It's milk!

FRANKIE: So, none of this is worth anything?

DINAH: Not necessarily. We have all the real celebrity samples in the back. We've been selling them on the side the past few years to make some extra dough. When cops come sniffing around, we pour milk into the containers to throw them off. If they find out, then our whole operation is busted.

BUSTER: That right? And so, it would be very hurtful for you if, say, this evidence fell into the wrong hands?

DINAH: Okay look fellas, maybe we can make a deal, huh?

FRANKIE: That depends. How much cash do you have back there?

DINAH: None. All of it is in the First National.

FRANKIE: Oh, for fuck's sake...

BUSTER: Well, what's the most valuable sample you got here? The thing that could fetch the best price.

DINAH: You're fucked if you think I'm handing that over to you.

BUSTER: Well then, I guess we're taking this to the police.

DINAH: You know what? Go ahead. See how far you get after trying to rob my sperm bank. Two guys wearing ski masks who don't go to church on Sunday at a sperm bank? Nothing suspicious there.

FRANKIE: If we get this to them, they'll jump on the chance to take you down first.

DINAH: Oh yeah? Who are they going to believe more? A sweet innocent young woman, or two brutish goons?

FRANKIE and BUSTER think for a moment

FRANKIE: Well, it would seem we've reached an impasse.

BUSTER: How do we proceed?

DINAH: How does this sound? You hand me back the samples and the receipt, and I let you keep one of the ones from the back.

FRANKIE and BUSTER discreetly converse with each other

FRANKIE: Do we get to pick the sample we keep?

DINAH: No.

FRANKIE: We need about \$17,000. How do we know our sample will fetch that price?

DINAH: Guess you won't. But at least you'll both be free men and with a little extra change in your pocket.

FRANKIE and BUSTER discreetly converse with each other again

BUSTER: Alright, but no funny business.

The three of them slowly approach each other. DINAH reaches in and grabs for the bag and the paper, but BUSTER and FRANKIE hold their grip.

FRANKIE: Hold it...how do we know that you'll give us a legitimate sample?

DINAH: Relax. You just hand this over to me and I'll go back. Make sure to give you an extra special one.

FRANKIE: Right, but how do we know you won't give us milk? Or that you'll just take this, go to the back room, and call the police while you're hidden safely?

DINAH: Let go of the bag and the paper.

The three tug on everything, trying to gain control over them. Suddenly, the paper tears in two and the sack goes flying, exploding milk all over the place and splashing it on the three of them.

FRANKIE: Now look at what you did! Now we can't go outside looking like this. The only thing more suspicious of two guys wearing ski masks are two guys wearing ski masks and covered in milk.

DINAH: What I did?! I was going to pay you two for trying to rob me and you couldn't give me a little faith! Give me that goddamn other half of the paper. I deserve that after the mess you've caused.

FRANKIE: How about you pay us first for it?! You're in no position to negotiate anymore! We hold all the cards!

DINAH: Oh yeah? Well, what if I...

BUSTER: SHUT UP! Both of you! SHUT UP!

The room goes quiet

BUSTER: All I wanted was a new suit. I never thought I was going to have to put up with so much bullshit to get it. Was that too much to ask for? This never would've happened if we brought guns like I wanted. Now I'm miserable, I'm covered in milk, and I've heard the word cum said more times in a day than I would like to. It could have been so easy to come to a compromise over this. But we couldn't give each other any trust. Now somebody better make a deal, give me some goddamn cash so that I can buy my GODDAMN suit! Or I'll just go and turn all three of us in and nobody gets what they want!

The three sit in silence for a moment

FRANKIE: I wanted to save my father's bar...

DINAH: What?

FRANKIE: The reason we did this...My father's bar is about to go bankrupt. It's the only thing I have left of him. I just wanted to be able to keep that part of him alive.

DINAH: Oh...I'm sorry

BUSTER: And my suit. Numb nut.

DINAH: If it's any consolation, I know what you're going through.

FRANKIE: You can't possibly.

DINAH: No? This sperm bank was my mother's. I know she wouldn't have been proud of me to see what I've been doing with the samples. But the business doesn't make very much. I had to do what I could to keep it open.

FRANKIE: Oh...I'm sorry.

The three sit in silence.

BUSTER: Yeah...and I wanted the new suit because it was my father's dream to have one.

FRANKIE: Really?

BUSTER: NO! Now stop with the waterworks and do something!

FRANKIE: You know...maybe a place to masturbate was just what bar patrons need...

DINAH: Yeah? And maybe more people would donate sperm if they could get a drink with it...

The two stare knowingly at each other

BUSTER: What the hell are you two talking about? What does this have to do with my suit?

FRANKIE: Can I make an offer?

DINAH: Please.

FRANKIE: How does "Ma and Pa's Drank and Spank" sound as a name for a new business?

DINAH: Has a nice ring to it.

BUSTER: Well, I'm so glad you two were able to come to this realization. But I just want to say it was my idea to rob this place and someone should pay me for my foresight, so I can buy my suit.

FRANKIE: How will we afford it?

DINAH: This might do the trick.

DINAH pulls out a vial of semen labeled "Abraham Lincoln".

FRANKIE: Is this real?

DINAH: As real as the milk on your pants.

FRANKIE: This could be worth millions!

BUSTER: I'd just like to point out that \$6000 would be a very unnoticeable amount to take off millions.

DINAH: My great grandmother kept it preserved for years. This is just the ticket we need to merge our businesses. What do you say?

DINAH reaches out for a handshake. FRANKIE thinks for a moment.

FRANKIE: I think it sounds like the start to a beautiful partnership.

FRANKIE shakes her hand.

BUSTER: Terrific! What do you say we go to RR Mioni's to celebrate, and we buy some suits?

FRANKIE: So, what do we do next?

DINAH: Well, how about we start with the Natural History Museum?

FRANKIE lifts up his ski mask

FRANKIE: Sounds like a start

FRANKIE and DINAH wrap their arms around each other and walk through the outside door, leaving BUSTER alone.

BUSTER: But what about my suit!?

END