

GRANDPA GANJA'S EMPORIUM

(THE HOLDUP)

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FADE IN:

EXT. DAY. SHOT OF POT CLUB.

Getting toward noon. Sunny, bright. EARL approaches the club with the aid of his red-tipped white cane.

INT. CLUB.

BETH is bending over the books at the center table. Place is empty except for the CHESS GUYS and GUITAR PLAYER playing softly. BETH looks up as EARL enters.

BETH

Earl. I thought you were going downtown today.

EARL

Couldn't go. Car's in the shop.

BETH

You were going to drive downtown?

EARL

How else would I get there? You ever take a bus in this town? It's like riding with a bunch of refugees fleeing a tsunami.

BETH

Earl, you don't have a car.

EARL

(belligerently)
I do, too. I just don't drive it as much as I used to.

(hands along table)

Any free samples?

BETH

(hands him a baggie)
Try this. Biker Bill just dropped
it off.

EARL

(opens baggie, smells pot)
Vancouver, right?

BETH

(impressed)
One sniff and you can tell where
it came from? That's amazing!

EARL

No, it isn't. I met Biker Bill
on the way in.
(loads pipe)

BETH

Well, he claims it's high-grade
pot and it's only eight bucks a gram.

EARL

The price is right.
(lights pipe, inhales)

BETH

(wryly)
It should be; you got it free.

GG enters from backroom.

GG

You back already, Earl?

BETH

He didn't go; his car broke
down.

GG

What car?

BETH

You don't want to know.
(points to keys)
Biker Bill just dropped off two
keys. Only \$225 an oz.

GG

Good price. How is it?

BETH

Ask Earl.

EARL

Very smooth with just a hint of
chocolate.

GG

Chocolate?

BETH

(baggie up)
Biker Bill had a half-eaten Mars
bar in the baggie.

GG

Hey, maybe we're onto something
here. Chocolate scented pot.

(takes baggie, sniffs)

We'll chop a Hershey bar up and
toss some in every baggie.

EARL

Or mints or cinnamon or...

GG

(musing)

Maybe we should get a patent...

A KID runs in and takes big gulps of pot smoke.

GG (cont'd)

Hey, you! No kids allowed!

BETH

(starts toward him
in wheelchair)

You little scamp, I'll...!

EARL

(raises cane and
threatens KID)

Hold him still and I'll brain
the little bastard!

GG
(arm up in defensive
posture)
Careful with that cane, Earl!

The KID ducks and darts around and sucks in a peck or so of high-grade smoke before darting out and down the street.

BETH
This keeps up and they'll arrest us for giving pot to minors.

EARL
It's this 'hood is what it is. Too many crooks around here. It's not safe for law abiding citizens anymore.

GG
It's not the neighborhood; it's the people in it. There's a gang on every corner and never a cop in sight.

BETH
We're lucky. I heard the 7-Eleven was robbed again the other day.

EARL
Maybe I should start packing heat here.

GG
You show up with a gun and nobody will come within a block of this place-including me.

BETH
Yeah, how would you know where to shoot, Earl?

EARL
That's the beauty of the thing. When a blind man starts shooting, everybody's a target. I can empty a large auditorium in 20 seconds flat.

GG

Besides, where would you get a gun?

EARL

I've already got a gun.

BETH

What for?

EARL

Self-defense.

GG

Against what?

EARL

Burglars.

GG

You think that gun will keep burglars out?

EARL

No, but my sign will.

BETH

What sign?

EARL

The one that says "Blind man inside has gun." Not only keeps burglars away, even Mormon missionaries don't ring Earl's doorbell.

GG

Shit, King Kong wouldn't ring your doorbell.

Door opens and MIKE enters. He's over 80 and looks it. He uses a cane and is unsteady on his feet.

BETH

It's Mike. How've you been, Mike?

MIKE

I was just down at the clinic. Doc says I've got a STD. Gave me a shot.

GG

Where would you get an STD?

MIKE

(baffled)

I have no idea.

(thinks)

Unless it was from Martha.

(thinks)

Or maybe Helen...or...

EARL

Or?! Jesus Christ, man, you're getting laid more than I am!

MIKE

(to EARL, grinning)

Yeah, how 'bout that?

BETH

You should be practicing safe sex.

MIKE

Tell that to Martha-or Helen or...

GG

How's the lumbago, Mike?

MIKE

That's why I'm here. Ran out of medicine again. Got any specials?

BETH

Biker Bill brought in some new pot from Vancouver. Only 10 bucks a gram.

MIKE

Only 10 bucks, eh?

GG

It's got just a hint of chocolate.

EARL

It's a new blend. Part marijuana and part Mars bar.

GG

Here, give her a try.

MIKE

(shakes head)

Can't. I'll take a quarter-oz. I'm in a hurry. Sarah's waiting for me in the car.

GG

Sarah? Who the hell is Sarah?

MIKE

Nurse. I found her over at the clinic. We're on our way to lunch.

BETH

(shakes head)

You keep it up and all this sex will kill you, Mike.

MIKE

(grins)

Yeah, how 'bout that?

GG

Here you go. That'll be \$75.

MIKE

(takes baggie,
starts out)

Put it on my tab, will ya? I'll pay you on the first.

(he leaves)

GG

What tab? We don't run tabs here.

BETH

We do now.

EARL

In that case, let me have an oz of that Lady Godiva pot and I'll pay up when Mike does.

GG

Are you kidding? You already get free pot. How do I know you'll pay later when you never pay now?

EARL

You're right, I won't pay, but we'll both feel better about it if we pretend I will.

BETH

Why don't we just pretend I already gave you an oz of pot? How's that sound?

EARL

What?! Trying to rip off a blind man! And me a war vet, too! Jesus Christ, I thought you guys were Christians.

GG

Now, wait a minute, Earl. There's no need to start insulting people.

BETH

Yeah, that's slander. You could be sued into poverty for calling somebody a Christian.

EARL

(overcome by enormity of it all)
Man, you're right. I don't know what came over me. Something flashed in front of me, like reality, maybe...
(beat)
It was scary.

GG

Maybe you're coming down, Earl.

EARL

Down?

BETH

It's what they call not being high.

EARL furrows his brow and thinks.

GG

I don't think he grasps the concept.

BETH

If you're not stoned, then you come down, Earl.

EARL

No shit.

(thinks)

And why would I want to do that?

GG

(thoughtfully)

Yeah, why would he want to do that?

BETH

(smiles)

Let's have some more of that Lady Godiva.

(hands baggie to GG)

All produce pipes and prepare to take up when the door opens and 1st DUDE enters. He looks around nervously as he moves to the table.

GG

Good morning, sir. What can we do for you?

1st DUDE

I need some pot. How much is it?

BETH

First, you need a doctor's note and...

1st DUDE

(shakes his head)

Shit, I don't have no note.

(pulls out gun)

All I got is this here gun...

BETH

Look out! He's got a gun!

EARL

Say what!?

GG

Jesus Christ, the 7-Eleven is
across the street, Mac!

1st DUDE

(nervous)

Get them hands up, motherfucker!

All raise hands.

GG

(nods at doorway)

Bad move. People out there see us
and they'll know it's a robbery.

1st DUDE

(looks at door)

Okay, put them hands down!

EARL

Is this your first stick-up?
You need a practice run.

1st DUDE

(brandishing gun,
to GG)

I want the pot and all your cash.
Get movin' or I start shootin'!

BETH

We just opened up. We don't have any
cash yet.

EARL

Rule #1: case the joint, find out
where the cash is.

1st DUDE

You got pot, motherfucker. Get some
pot out here an' be fuckin' quick
about it.

GG

Okay, you win. Don't shoot
anybody; we'll give you the pot.

GG starts for the backroom; the chess players play on.

EARL
(lunges forward & flails
empty air with cane)
I got the bastard, Gramps!

All stare in amazement at EARL as he flails thin air.

1st DUDE
What the fuck you doin', man?

GG
(moving to EARL)
Earl! Are you nuts? Cut that out
before somebody gets hurt!

EARL
(breathing hard)
I almost had him, by god!
(lunges again where
DUDE isn't)

1st DUDE
Man, if you don't cut that shit
out, I'll...I'll shoot this here lady.

BETH
Me? You're supposed to shoot the men
and let the women go!

1st DUDE
(indignant)
Hey, I ain't gonna shoot no blind
man. What kinda guy you think I
am?

GG
(pushing EARL away)
Nobody's getting shot. Put the gun
away, pal. I'll get some pot.

As GG starts for the backroom 2nd DUDE enters, sees what's
going on, and pulls out his own gun and gets the drop on
the FIRST DUDE.

2nd DUDE
Drop the gun, asshole!

All freeze and 1st DUDE slowly lays gun on the table.

GG
What the hell is this? A goddamn
robbers' convention?

2nd DUDE
Shut up, asshole! I want the cash
an' some pot. Get movin'!

1st DUDE
They haven't got no cash, man.
They jus' opened up. Don't you
know you're supposed to case
the joint before you rob it?

2nd DUDE
Hey, if you're so smart, how come
I'm the one with the gun?

GG
(to others)
He's got a point there.
(they nod in agreement)

2nd DUDE
(waves gun, to GG)
Get that pot, man! I ain't got all
day.

GG
(starts for backroom)
Coming up, friend.
(takes EARL by the arm)

2nd DUDE
An' don't try nothing funny or
I'll...
(looks around,
spots BETH)
...I'll shoot this lady here!

BETH
Oh, no! Not again!
(looks down)

BETH (cont'd)
 Am I wearing a target, for God's
 sake? Did somebody stick a
 SHOOT ME sign on my forehead? Did
 you guys ever hear about chivalry?

GG
 (to 2nd DUDE)
 Forget her. I'll get the pot.

GG leaves with EARL; BETH and robbers eye each other.

1st DUDE
 Say, man, you gonna give me some of
 the pot, ain't you?

2nd DUDE
 You crazy? Why would I give you
 anything?

1st DUDE
 (indignant)
 Shit, man, I was here first, you
 know what I'm sayin'?
 Ain't you never heard about
 professional courtesy, man?

2nd DUDE
 What I never heard about was a
 courteous crook, asshole. So shut
 up or else I'll...

BETH rolls her eyes as GG and EARL return with each
 carrying a 35-pound bale of pot wrapped in burlap. They
 drop the bales on the table.

2nd DUDE (cont'd)
 How am I gonna carry all that
 pot, man?

GG
 You could just take one.
 (pats bale)
 This is Panama Red; it's \$500 an oz...

BETH
 No, that's Monterey Mex. It's
 \$80 an oz...

GG

Are you sure? Wasn't the Panama Red
by the door?

EARL

(to 2nd DUDE)

Why don't you check 'em both out,
man? Then you'd be sure you got
the Panama Red.

GG

Good idea. Here, let me get you a
pipe...

1st DUDE

Get me a pipe, too, man. The least
I can do is get me a smoke out of
all this shit.

BETH moves to the table and pulls some pot from GG's bale.
She hands some to both robbers and EARL.

BETH

Here you go. This is Monterey
Mex-I think.

GG

(hands pipes out
to all)

We'll find out. Fill 'er up and
see if it passes the taste test.

2nd DUDE

I ain't got all day for this shit.
Who got a light?

BETH produces a lighter.

BETH

(lighter up)

Take a good hit to get the full
effects of the pot.

2nd DUDE

(brandishes gun)

Don't try nothin' funny or...

BETH moves behind GG. All light up and inhale mighty drafts of smoke, hold their breath, and exhale as one.

GG

(to 2nd DUDE)

So, how is it?

2nd DUDE

Hmm. Good, man, this is good pot.

EARL

But is it Panama Red or Mexican?

1st DUDE

I say this is Mexican. It's good but the bouquet ain't right. It lacks subtlety.

2nd DUDE

Yeah, the fragrance is weedy, man.

EARL

That's because we're burning weeds here. When you burn weeds they won't smell like pork chops.

GG

But it kicks in real good, got a nice little bump to it.

BETH

But I think it's Mexican. It doesn't have much substance.

1st DUDE

Yeah, like it's kinda thin. I like thick smoke, the kind you can cut up in chunks and carry home in a paper sack.

2nd DUDE

And it's got overtones of salsa, too. You can taste it, man.

EARL

Salsa? We're not talking burritos here. Who ever heard of salsa in pot even if it is from Mexic

2nd DUDE

Wait, maybe it's from those tamales
I got from the 7-Eleven.

GG

You were in the 7-Eleven? Why didn't
you rob them since you were already
there, for Christ's sake?

2nd DUDE

(truculently)

They don't have any pot, that's why.

All nod, comment. "Good point." "Makes sense." Etc.

GG

Well, let's make sure which one it is.
Give us some of the other bale, Beth.

EARL

And get some paper sacks so I can
take some home for my cat.

BETH

Since when have you had a cat?

EARL

Since last week, that's when. I got
him from one of those seeing-eye dog
schools. They ran out of dogs so they
gave me a seeing-eye cat.

GG

So where is he?

EARL

He hasn't finished training yet.
They think he might have ADD.

2nd DUDE

Man, you can't train a seeing-eye
cat.

GG

He's right. Cats won't take orders.
They have no talent for the job.

EARL

Oh, yeah? Cats are even better'n
dogs, especially at night. Dogs
can't see in the dark like a cat can.

2nd DUDE

Fuck the cat, man. We got a robbery
goin' on here. Open up that new bale
and let's get the show on the goddamn
road before I...

(looks around, BETH
ducks)

GG

Right.

(moves to table,
takes pot from bale)

Here we go. 500 bucks or 100? Which
pot is which?

GG hands pot to them and they inspect it.

1st DUDE

(examines pot)

Got good color.

2nd DUDE

(inhaling)

An' a piquant aroma with a tiny bit
of...

EARL

...a fruity taste...

GG

...but tangy...

BETH

...and buds the size of billiard
balls.

GG

This must be the good stuff.

2nd DUDE

I gotta make sure. I don't want
to steal no cheap ganja.

BETH
Let's light 'er up and see.

BETH holds a lighter and others light their pipes. All take big hits of smoke, hold breath, exhale as one.

1st DUDE
(staggers back)
Whoa, man!

2nd DUDE
(grinning)
Man, this is the Red!

EARL
I can see! I can see!

GG
(declaiming)
A noble weed! And see how thick
the smoke is!
(waves at eddying smoke)

EARL
(sniffing smoke
waving it into shirt)
Where's that paper bag?

2nd DUDE
(reaches for lighter)
This is killer weed, all right.

BETH
It makes me feel like a new man!

EARL
You mean like a new woman.

BETH
(smiles ruefully)
No, I don't.

EARL
Oh.

GG
(to 2nd DUDE)
Whatta you think?

2nd DUDE

'Bout what?

1st DUDE

You robbin' this place, man.
Now, you know that ain't right.

2nd DUDE

Who are you to tell me what's right,
dude? You were robbin' the place
first yourself.

1st DUDE

Yeah, but this here Red ganja made
me see robbin' people ain't right.
I'm goin' straight, turnin' my life
around, and you should, too, man.

2nd DUDE

Okay, man, you're right. I don't want
to be a criminal; I'm gonna turn my
life over to Jesus!

EARL

(aside)

Shit, that's a little extreme, isn't it?

BETH

Yeah, I think I like you better as
a crook.

2nd DUDE puts his gun down on the table and the 1st DUDE
grabs it and points at others.

1st DUDE

Okay, asshole, who's the smart
motherfucker now?

All freeze as the door opens and the SISTERS enter. 1st
DUDE turns the gun on them.

1st DUDE (cont'd)

Hold it right there or I'll...
(points at BETH)

BETH shakes her head and ducks behind GG again.

1st SISTER
 Are we interrupting anything? We
 could come back later...

2nd SISTER
 ...or we don't have to come back at all.

1st DUDE
 Shut up and get over here!
 (gestures with gun)

Seemingly flustered, the SISTERS move as directed but a keen observer would notice that they both keep wary eyes on the robber as they acquiesce.

1st NUN
 You might want to be careful
 with that gun, sir. It's bad luck
 to shoot a nun.

1st DUDE
 Oh, yeah? Who says so?

2nd NUN
 We do.

1st NUN
 (points suddenly)
 Look out!

1st DUDE jerks the gun around and looks widely about for any danger. Quick as cats, the NUNS strike. Both reveal hidden cat-o-'nine-tail whips from their robes and commence lashing 1st DUDE in a fury. Alarmed, he drops the gun and throws up his hands to protect himself. GG beats 2nd DUDE to the gun and covers both robbers.

GG
 Good work, ladies! This guy will
 never rob again!
 (to thugs)
 Okay, boys. The jig is up.

1st DUDE
 Hey, man, that's racist shit.

GG
 What is?

1st DUDE

That jig shit, man. You can't call nobody a jig. I'll have the NAACP on your racist ass.

GG

Jesus Christ, you rob me and I have to give you English lessons. It means the game is up, asshole, you lose. You'll get ten years for armed robbery..

2nd DUDE

He's not armed, man. That gun's not real. It's a toy gun.

EARL

Jesus, that's the oldest trick in the book. Who ever heard...

1st NUN

He's telling the truth. It's a revolver and the cylinder is plugged.

2nd NUN

And it says Mattell on the handle.

GG holds the gun up and all spot the Mattell logo.

BETH

(points at 1st DUDE)
Where's this guy's gun?

All look at the table where the 1st DUDE laid his gun and all start for it. GG grabs it and holds it on the robbers.

GG

You mean this one?

1st DUDE

Ain't real, man.

GG

What?

1st DUDE

Hey, man, I ain't gonna use a real gun. Somebody could get hurt.

2nd DUDE
Yeah, you think we're crazy, man?

EARL
So what do we do now?

1st NUN
(waves whip)
The Devil makes them do it...

2nd NUN
...and we know how to make him stop.

The NUNS advance on the robbers with whips at the ready.

1st DUDE
Say what?

2nd DUDE
You gonna whip the Devil out of us?

1st DUDE
That's torture, man! Ain't that shit
illegal?

GG
Not anymore.

DUDES are driven toward the backroom as NUNS advance.

1st DUDE
Hey, watch it with that whip, lady!

The NUNS flail away as robbers flee to backroom.

EARL
I hope the Geneva Convention people
don't hear about this.

GG
I say we go watch. I never saw
anybody get flagellated before.

BETH
Good idea.

They start for the backroom.

EARL

Hey, what am I supposed to do?

Alone, he shrugs and starts filling his pipe with Panama Red.

Guitar music up.

THE END