



TAKE THE MONEY AND RUN  
Woody Allen, 1969

TRANSCRIPT

NARRATOR

On December 1st, 1935, Mrs. Williams Starkwell, the wife of a New Jersey handyman, gives birth to her first and only child. It is a boy, and they name it Virgil. He is an exceptionally cute baby, with a sweet disposition. Before he is 25 years old, he will be wanted by police in six states, for assault, armed robbery, and illegal possession of a wart.

Growing up in a slum neighbourhood where the crime rate is amongst the highest in the nation is not easy. Particularly for Virgil, who is small and frail compared to the other children.

Virgil Starkwell attends this school, where he scores well on an IQ test, although his behaviour disturbs the teachers. We interviewed Mrs. Dorothy Lowry, a school teacher who remembers Virgil.

DOROTHY LOWRY

I remember one time, he stole a fountain pen. I didn't want to embarrass him. You know teachers have ways of doing things. So I said to the class. We will all close our eyes, and will the one who took the pen, please return it. Well, while our eyes were closed, he returned the pen. But he took the opportunity of feeling all the girls! Can I say feel?

NARRATOR

Spending most of his time in the streets, Virgil takes to crime at an early age. He is an immediate failure. He barely manages to escape with a gumball machine stuck on his hand.

With both parents working to make ends meet, Virgil becomes closest to his grandfather, a 60-year-old German immigrant who takes the boy to movies and baseball games. Then tragedy strikes. At a Washington Senator's game, Virgil's grandfather is struck in the head by a foul ball. The blow causes permanent injury to his mind. And he becomes convinced he is Kaiser Wilhelm. Here are some rare photos of him with other patients on the sanitarium grounds.

When he is 15 years old, amidst the violence and poverty of the slums, Virgil receives a cello as a gift. He is fascinated by the instrument. And for the first time in the Starkwell house, music is heard. We spoke to Mr. Torgman, his first and only cello teacher.

MR. TORGMAN

Well, there is not very much tell, because... Uh... Because his cello playing was just terrible. He would a... He'd no idea about tone production. He would just saw it back

and forth. Just scratch the instrument to such a point that it would drive everyone who listening to it an absolutely insane. He had no conception of the instrument. He was blowing into it... He loved his cello. And I think he stole to pay for his lessons. But he would not apply himself one iota.

NARRATOR

Virgil steals to pay for cello lessons. And although he does not achieve greatness on the instrument, he is soon good enough to play in a local band. A jungle however is no place for a cellist. And Virgil soon learns the facts of life.

At 18, Virgil is lonely and confused. Unable to concentrate in school, he has long since dropped out. He wants nothing more than to belong, if only to a street gang. It is here he thinks he will prove his manhood. Under constant economic pressure, Virgil turns to the local pool hall as a means of making a living. I'm going to be a pool hustler, he tells his friends.

VIRGIL

Ball, please. Okay, thanks.

NARRATOR

Virgil tries to join the navy, but is psychologically unfit.

VIRGIL, *psychological test*

That looks to me like two elephants making love to a men's glee club.

NARRATOR

Mr. T.S. Foster, Virgil's first probation officer, remembers him vividly.

T.S. FOSTER

He was a trustworthy kind of person. I mean, you had to remember certain idiosyncrasies that he had.

INTERVIEWER

Like what?

T.S. FOSTER

Well, uh... like not always telling the truth. He didn't always tell the truth. Sometimes, uh, he'd exaggerate the truth. Sometimes, he, uh... you know, just plain lies. He does have a criminal record. Yes, but that doesn't mean that the boy was all bad.

NARRATOR

Unable to fit in with any aspect of his environment, Virgil strikes out on his own.

0:07:45 *CREDITS, Virgil in prison*

NARRATOR

In an effort to shed some light on this period of his life, we spoke with his father and mother. They are ashamed of their son's criminal record and so wear disguises.

MOTHER

He was a good boy.

FATHER

Oh, come on. If he was a good boy, why are we wearing these? He's rotten! He's a gangster, that's what he is.

MOTHER

Oh! How can you say that? He was so bright and he was so talent.

FATHER

What "bright and talent"?

MOTHER

And he loved music.

FATHER

And he was an atheist.

MOTHER

He could've been a musician.

FATHER

I tried to beat God into him. But he was too tough.

MOTHER

He was trying to get away from us and be independent and make his own life and be a human being on his own. I mean you're a very dominating person.

FATHER

What?

MOTHER

You are! And he was trying to find himself.

FATHER

Me? I'm...?

MOTHER

Yes!

FATHER

Ok, look, I'll talk to you later about the whole thing.

MOTHER

What do you mean later?

NARRATOR

Vowing that he will never serve his full term, Virgil plans an elaborate escape using a bar of soap and some shoe polish.

*At the prison.*

VIRGIL

Guard, guard!

GUARD  
Yeah?

VIRGIL  
You've got to take me to the infirmary!

GUARD  
What's the matter?

VIRGIL  
Don't ask!

*The escape fails because of rain.*

NARRATOR  
Virgil's attempt to escape is dealt with harshly. His sentence is extended in an additional two years. 1956 is a happy, go-lucky year for most people. [*Happy looking people scenes*] Virgil sees none of it from his tiny cell. He marks time by reading. Until one day, a new opportunity arises.

CAPTAIN  
We need volunteers for an experiment. The doctors want someone to be inoculated with a new vaccine. It's never been tried on humans before, so we do not know what the side effects may be. To be honest, you'll be taking a chance. As a reward, there's a parole. I'm sure there are some among you brave enough to take the risk.

NARRATOR  
With parole as inducement, Virgil submits to the vaccine test. It is a success, except for one temporary side effect. For several hours, he is turned into a rabbi.

VIRGIL  
And so the reason we celebrate the Passover holidays by eating the Matzo, is to commemorate the time that Moses led the children of Israel from Egypt.

0:12:50

MOTHER  
He has so many good qualities, I mean...

FATHER  
Yeah, yeah... Name 'em, name 'em.

MOTHER  
He had all sorts of mechanical abilities. He was artistic. You remember the painting he did for you on your birthday?

FATHER  
A no good atheist, that's what he is. I used to hit him and try to teach him about God. But, would he listen? No!

NARRATOR

Virgil leaves prison apprehensive. But with some hope that he can begin a new life. Instead he finds a world difficult to cope with. Ashamed to go home, he rents a cheap room in a strange city.

*Virgil takes the purse of an old woman y run, but there's nothing of value in it.*

NARRATOR

Desperate and broke, Virgil tries to support himself with small crimes. Here he attempts to rob a local pet shop.

*Virgil is pursued by a gorilla.*

*In the park, Virgil tries to take the purse of a young girl, Louise, as she is drawing on a paper. She thinks Virgil is watching her work.*

LOUISE

I hope you haven't been watching me, I'm not very good.

VIRGIL

Uh, I was strolling down here just now and I noticed that you were drawing something and I thought...

LOUISE

You can look at it, if you want to.

VIRGIL

Can I?

LOUISE

Though it's not very good.

VIRGIL

Oh, I wouldn't say that. I think that's... that's wonderful. I uh... uh...

LOUISE

It's not very good.

VIRGIL

Well, I think that's very good, actually. I think you can probably make cash. Are you an artist?

LOUISE

No, of course, I'm not. I'm not an artist.

VIRGIL

No? Well, what do you do?

LOUISE

I'm a laundress.

VIRGIL

Laundress? Laundry?

LOUISE

Yeah. I wash clothes, primarily.

VIRGIL

That's great!

LOUISE

No, it isn't. I like it, but it's not particularly interesting.

VIRGIL

What's your name?

LOUISE

Louise. What's yours?

VIRGIL

Virgil. Starkwell, Virgil Starkwell.

LOUISE

What do you do?

VIRGIL

What I do? What I do... Um... I play the cello.

LOUISE

Oh! That's fantastic.

VIRGIL

Yes, I'm a cellist. It's a wonderful job.

LOUISE

Are you with the Philharmonic?

VIRGIL

Yes, I am actually.

LOUISE

Oh, that's fantastic!

VIRGIL

Yes, I'm with the Philharmonic group. Quite a good group, yeah. I dress like this 'cuz I'm just off work now. Can I interested you in going for a walk at all?

LOUISE

Okay.

VIRGIL, *voice over*

I, uh... I know I was in love, but... first of all I was very nauseous. You know, I've never met such a pretty girl. I guess I'm sensitive. Because, you know, real beauty makes me want to gag. Plus, I don't know how to act with girls, you know, I'm shy and I'm just nervous around women. I have a tendency to dribble. Uh, you know, the only girl I have known was a girl in my neighborhood. But she was not an attractive

girl. I used to make obscene phone calls to her collect and she used to accept the charges all the time, but nothing ever happened. And here I'm lying through my teeth and I can't tell Louise that I was in jail and that I rob and steal and never did an honest day's work in my life. You know a lot of people hold those things against you. But she was so sweet. We just walked in the park. I was so touched by her that after 15 minutes I wanted to marry her. And after half an hour, I completely gave up the idea of snatching her purse. I wanted to actually tell her I wasn't with the Philharmonic, but she was so impressed by it. Once she asked me some questions about Mozart, and she got suspicious because for a minute I couldn't place the name. I, uh, I don't know... when it comes to women... In prison I remember the psychiatrist asked me if I had a girl, and I said no. And he said, do I think that sex is dirty. And I said it is, if you were doing it right. All I know is my heart was really pounding and I felt... I felt a funny tingling all over. I don't know, I was either in love or I had small pox.

VIRGIL

Hey, you want to have dinner tonight?

LOUISE

Sure.

0:19:03

*Virgil in his room prepares himself for his date. He's got some problems with water. Tries some poses in the mirror. Goes out, but returns immediately because he's forgotten his trousers.*

0:21:10

*In the restaurant. Virgil gives the waiter the coins he's stolen from a candy machine.*

VIRGIL, *to Louise*

You're very beautiful. I really mean that. Does it embarrass you, when I say that?

LOUISE

Uh, huh, it does.

VIRGIL

That's a pretty hat.

LOUISE

Thank you.

VIRGIL

Yeah, I see them all over town.

LOUISE

Do you?

VIRGIL

You know, feather and the white.

LOUISE

I haven't seen any.

VIRGIL

Yeah, they're on sale downtown. I passed them as I was walking around the streets. I passed a million of them, you know, in one of those bins.

LOUISE

Is that do?

VIRGIL

I could watch you eat for all night.

LOUISE

But why?

VIRGIL

I don't know. You're so pretty when you...

VIRGIL, *voice off*

After dinner, we went for a walk. I, uh, asked her for a lock of her hair, you know. And we didn't have any scissors so I tried pulling it out. And she was a good sport, I tell you. I'm telling you when she got excited she stuttered. I think she was so cute that way. I like a girl who stutters. They turn red, they're always gasping for breathe, you know, it's really sweet looking. And she, um, she was an expert on laundry. She was fantastic. I offered to let her do my shorts and she was very moved by that, I think. She just knew everything about underwear. I never saw anybody who knew so much about socks and T-shirts. She was some kind of genius that way.

*Virgil kisses Louise.*

LOUISE

G... g... good night, Virgil.

0:23:25

NARRATOR

Continuing his deception, Virgil sees Louise more frequently. When she questions him about his cello playing, he avoids the subject.

In order to better understand Louise, let us examine her background briefly. Adopted at age two, from a cruel and impoverished orphanage by a career military man and his wife, she was subjected to an upbringing of extreme discipline which left her shy and withdrawn. Never having a real home, she lived on army bases while her father pursued a brilliant military career that after 30 years catapulted him to the rank of corporal. Her mother, an alcoholic turns to religion for comfort and quickly becomes a fanatic. She responds to Louise's need for love by beating the child and claims to have conversations with God in which they discuss salvation and interior decorating. Destitute and in love Virgil attempts to change his life with one bold stroke.

0:24:09



*The bank robbery.*

BANK EMPLOYEE

And if you just take this to window number 9.

CUSTOMER

Thank you.

EMPLOYEE

What does this say?

VIRGIL

Uh, can't you read that?

EMPLOYEE

I can't read this. What's this? "Abt natural"?

VIRGIL

No, it says, "Please put fifty thousand dollars into this bag and act natural".

EMPLOYEE

It doesn't say "Act natural"?

VIRGIL

I, uh, am pointing a gun at you.

EMPLOYEE

That looks like "gub". It doesn't look like "gun".

VIRGIL

No, it's "gun".

EMPLOYEE

No, it's "gub". That's a B.

VIRGIL

No, see that's an N... G-U-N. Understand?

EMPLOYEE

George, would you step over here a moment please. What does this say?

EMPLOYEE 2

"Please put fifty thousand dollars into this bag and... abt natural"... What's "abt"?

VIRGIL

It's "act".

EMPLOYEE

Does this look like "gub" or "gun"?

EMPLOYEE 2

"Gun".

VIRGIL, *to the first employee*  
You see?

EMPLOYEE 2  
But what's "abt", mean?

VIRGIL  
"Act", A-C-T, act. "Please put fifty thousand dollars into this bag. Act natural".

EMPLOYEE  
Oh, I see, this is a hold up!

VIRGIL  
Yes.

EMPLOYEE  
May I see your gun?

*Virgil shows his gun.*

EMPLOYEE  
Well, you'll have to have this note initialized by one of our vice-presidents before I can give you any money.

VIRGIL  
You see, I'm in a rush.

EMPLOYEE  
What?

VIRGIL  
Rush.

EMPLOYEE  
I'm sorry, but that's our policy. The gentleman in the gray suit.

VIRGIL  
That's G-U-N... It's "I'm pointing a gun at you".

VICE PRESIDENT  
That's "gub"...

VIRGIL  
I'm pointing a gun at you.

VICE PRESIDENT  
That's B, its "gub".

VIRGIL  
No, it's N.

VICE PRESIDENT

Miss Frank!

MISS FRANK

"I'm pointing a gun at you. Abt natural". What is "abt"?

VIRGIL

No, it's "act".

MISS FRANK

No, it couldn't be. That's a plain B.

VIRGIL

No, no, no, no. I'm afraid not. That's "act naturally. I'm pointing a gun at you".

MISS FRANK

Mr. Miller!

MR. MILLER

"I... am pointing a gub".

VIRGIL

No, that's gun, it's G-U-N. That's gun. It's "I'm pointing a gun at you." It looks like a B, but it's a N.

*The discussion involves all people in the bank.*

VIRGIL, *at the police station*

Hello, Louise? Listen, I can't make our date today. I've got to go to Boston to give a concert. Well, look, why don't I give you a call in about a...

POLICE

In about 10 years.

*The judge takes Virgil's glasses away and treads.*

NARRATOR

Virgil Starkwell is apprehended in the act of bank robbery. He is given 10 years at the State's strictest maximum-security prison. It is here that he mingles with harden criminals for the first time... "A prison has not been built that can hold me", Virgil tells another inmate. "And I'll get out of this one, if it means spending my entire life here".

MOTHER

After all, what a child becomes is according to what his environment is, what his background is... Let's face it, it's our fault.

FATHER

Would you let a man say a word or two? I knew there was a day when I said: This kid is rotten. You know the expression, a rotten kid? That's what this kid is. I knew when he was...

MOTHER

What genes did he have?

FATHER

What? Genes?

MOTHER

And chromosomes.

FATHER

What? What? What? Don't talk fancy in front of the man. Because you know, you'll make an impression and...

0:28:18

NARRATOR

The time passes slowly for Virgil who works hard and tries to adjust to prison life. He becomes a model prisoner and is put to work in the laundry.

POLICE

Visitor, Starkwell.

VIRGIL

For me? [*to Louise*] I'm not with the Philharmonic.

LOUISE

I know.

VIRGIL

I'm sorry.

LOUISE

It's okay Virgil. You don't mind that I came to see you, do you?

VIRGIL

No, I'm happy to see you. But how did you find out I was here?

LOUISE

I called up your landlady. She told me where you were. She said that... Virgil, did you rob a bank?

VIRGIL

I did not rob a bank. If I robbed a bank, everything would be great.

LOUISE

Well, what did you do?

VIRGIL

I tried to rob a bank, that's what happened. And, uh, they got me. I misspelled the note.

LOUISE

Virgil.

VIRGIL  
Can you bake?

LOUISE  
Yeah.

VIRGIL  
I need a cake, big cake. Like a chocolate layer cake.

LOUISE  
Virgil, you're allergic to chocolate.

VIRGIL  
I need a cake with a gun in it.

LOUISE  
I'll bake you a cake but I won't put the gun in.

VIRGIL  
Then I'd like about a dozen chocolate chip cookies with a bullet in each.

LOUISE  
How long are you going to be here?

VIRGIL  
Oh, well, uh, I estimate in the neighborhood of... What's today, Monday? Tuesday... Wednesday, Thursday... 10 years.

LOUISE  
Virgil!

VIRGIL  
Is it possible that you could wait for me?

LOUISE  
Yes, if you want me to.

*0:31:40*

NARRATOR  
With Louise to inspire him, Virgil works hard and becomes more optimistic. She comes frequently for the next few months. He complains about the food, and she brings him home-cooked meals. Louise's impact on Virgil is discussed here by Dr. Julius Epstein... one time prison psychiatrist, who recalls Virgil.

DR. JULIUS EPSTEIN  
Louise meant a great deal to Virgil from a psychiatric point of view. His love for her was the healthiest thing in his life. It was genuine and clean. Not like some patients I know.

CONVICT

She ain't gonna wait Virgil.

CONVICT 2

They think they can, but they never do.

VIRGIL

You know I become eligible for parole in a year and a half.

CONVICT 2

Yeah, well that's nice. With any luck, in maybe two or three years you'll get out of here, yeah.

CONVICT

It could be a lot shorter.

VIRGIL

What do you mean?

CONVICT 2

He means we got this proposition we wanna talk over with you.

VIRGIL

What kind of proposition?

CONVICT 2

Like next week five of us are gonna make it out of here. Now we need an extra man.

CONVICT

It's all set. By next week, we could be miles away from this zoo.

VIRGIL

You guys gotta be kidding. We'll never get out of here. They'd kill us.

CONVICT

We've got out of rougher places than this.

CONVICT 2

Why don't you just think about it? Ain't no broad gonna wait around for years for you. No matter what she tells you in that visiting hall.

DR. JULIUS EPSTEIN

Well, I think the conflict in this personality, sort of started from his formative years. I think that it gave evidence in his choice of the cello. For instance, studying the cello at the age of six he was coming out of the formative years, but the conflict is there within the choice. Because it is generally assumed the cello is a phallic symbol, I mean with the grasp and the lowest structural form is certainly feminine, and if anything motherly. In fact, the utilization of the bow, I would imagine is the sublimation of stroking a torso. So between the grasping of the phallic and the stroking of the torso, would create, I would imagine great conflict even at the age of six.

0:34:08

NARRATOR

Virgil Starkwell becomes part of an escape plot. His every move becomes tense and strained.

CONVICT 2

Take the guards on our floor with us. So be ready if there's trouble.

VIRGIL

I don't understand how we are gonna get past the main tower.

CONVICT 2

We're gonna be dressed as guards. That's why Friday at noon because you work in the laundry, you're gonna steal the guards underwear.

VIRGIL

What?

CONVICT 2

We've already got some uniforms stashed in a dark room.

VIRGIL

I don't understand. If you got the guard's uniforms, why do you need their underwear?

CONVICT

We want to do this as realistically as possible.

CONVICT 2

I'm known for my detail work.

*Virgil steals some underwears from the laundry.*

GUARD

Sir, we can't find our underwear!

GUARD 2

I think something's up.

WARDEN

Um, we'd better keep our eyes open.

PRISONER 1

The warden knows something is up. We'd better call off the break.

PRISONER 2

What?

PRISONER 1

I said, the warden knows something is up. We'd better call off the break.

PRISONER 2

It's all set for tonight.

PRISONER 1

It's too risky. We can't take a chance.

PRISONER 2

Tell Virgil. I'll tell the rest of these guys.

PRISONER 1

The break's off. The warden knows something is up. We'll try it again next week.

GUARD, *to Prisoner 1*

The warden wants to see you.

PRISONER 1

What for?

GUARD

Come on!

NARRATOR

Michael Sullivan, an ex-convict and one of the leaders of the break describes the faithful day.

MICHAEL SULLIVAN

I told all the other guys that the break was off. But I forgot to tell Virgil. [*Laughs*] I don't know why I forgot. [*Laughs*] Nobody ever told him. [*Laughs*]

*Virgil attempts to escape.*

VIRGIL

Already!

PRISONER

What?

GUARD

There's a break in the north cell block. Notify the warden immediately.

VIRGIL, *shouts*

Hey where is everybody?

PRISONER

We've called the break off!

VIRGIL

You called the break off?

PRISONER

Yeah!

VIRGIL



Why didn't somebody tell me?

PRISONER

Virgil's out there by himself! [*Laughs*]

VIRGIL

Could somebody possible sneak downstairs and let me back in?

*Virgil kidnaps the warden daughter.*

VIRGIL

All right, warden. Look I got your daughter!

WARDEN

Please, hold you fire men!

VIRGIL

Let me go or she gets it!

WARDEN

What is she doing down there?

VIRGIL

She was kissing Kowalsky.

WARDEN

Is Kowalsky a midget?

VIRGIL

No!

WARDEN

What'd he say?

GUARD

He is not a midget.

*Virgil goes out the prison and ask for a taxi.*

VIRGIL

Can I have a taxi, please.

TAXI DRIVER

First one in line's next.

*0:39:45*

*Virgil joins Louise.*

NARRATOR

On July 11, Virgil and Louise marry. It is a simple ceremony following what he later describes as a deeply moving blood test.

VIRGIL, *off*

This was the happiest moment of my life. I just wish my parents could have been there.

MOTHER

We weren't aware of it...

FATHER

I mean... Am I right? Am I right? Say it! Be honest! He turned out to be a punk. Punk, punk, punk, punk.

NARRATOR

They took up residence in another State. And living on Louise's small savings, they moved into a cheaply furnished flat. They are poor, but for the moment at least they were save from the law. When these innocent pictures were taken, they were both unaware of the incredible series of events that were to come.

*She is clumsy cooking, he is awkward undressing her.*

VIRGIL

Oh!

LOUISE

What's the matter Virgil?

VIRGIL

I got a cramp in the arch of my foot.

LOUISE

What?

VIRGIL

A little hardball come out in the arch of my foot.

LOUISE

Why does that always happen everytime we make love? Oh Jesus!

NARRATOR

As a wanted criminal, Virgil finds it harder than ever to find employment. He secures a little work selling encyclopedias door to door. But the job proves too much for him. He is forced to take to the streets and for a while he earns a meager living selling meagers.

LOUISE

We're going to have a baby!

VIRGIL

Get out of here!

LOUISE

No, no, we're going to have a baby. I went to the doctor and we are going to have a baby. That's my present for Christmas.

VIRGIL

All I needed was a tie.

LOUISE

Aren't you happy?

VIRGIL

I don't believe it.

LOUISE

No, Virgil, really.

VIRGIL

But how did it happen?

LOUISE

What do you mean, how did it happen?

VIRGIL

You mean because... of that night, when the two of us...

LOUISE

Uh, uh.

VIRGIL

And that's what happened?

LOUISE

Uh, uh.

NARRATOR

In the spring Virgil and Louise are blessed with a son. They name the boy Jonathan Ralph Starkwell, after Virgil's mother. Virgil and Louise move to a new State and try to start over. Virgil has the usual trouble finding work. Finally he hears of an opening in an insurance office and is back against the wall. He attempts to lie his way into the job.

EMPLOYER

Please, sit down... Name please.

VIRGIL

John Q. Public. That's P-U-B-L-I-C.

EMPLOYER

Mr. Public, have you had any experience working in an office before?

VIRGIL

Yes, I have.

EMPLOYER

What kind of office was it?

VIRGIL

Rectangular.

EMPLOYER

Have you ever had any experience in running a high-speed digital electronic computer?

VIRGIL

Yes, I have.

EMPLOYER

Where?

VIRGIL

My aunt has one.

EMPLOYER

And what does your aunt do?

VIRGIL

I can't recall.

EMPLOYER

You said before you worked in an office. Did you deal in products or services?

VIRGIL

Products.

EMPLOYER

Is this something found in the home?

VIRGIL

No, it's not. It's one down and nine to go.

EMPLOYER

Is this product edible?

VIRGIL

No, I'm afraid it wasn't. I think our time has run out and I'm sorry to say you haven't guessed my occupation. So I'm going to flip all the cards and tell you what I used to do. I used to manufacture escalator shoes, for people who were nauseous in elevator shoes. I'm sorry, you didn't actually get my occupation, but you did win \$10. I want to thank you very much. Better luck next time. You are good sport.

*0:45:30*

NARRATOR

Hiding his past from his fellow employees, Virgil does well onat his first decent job, the mailroom. His past catches up with him however, as a fellow employee learns of his criminal record.

MISS BLAIR

What are you doing for dinner, Mr. Public?

VIRGIL

Oh, Miss Blair, I'm having dinner with my wife. Why?

MISS BLAIR

We're having dinner, Mr. Public.

VIRGIL

No, I said I was having dinner with my wife.

MISS BLAIR

I found this picture in a magazine. One word from me and you're back in prison, Okay?

VIRGIL

What do you feel like eating?

NARRATOR

Virgil Starkwell becomes the victim of a blackmail plot. Miss Blair confident of her power to expose him begins making small demands for money. These increase as time goes on. Everything that he holds dear to him is in jeopardy. His life and family hang on the whim of an unstable woman. He is driven to desperation. And with the responsibility of a wife and child to protect, Virgil Starkwell contemplates murder.

MISS BLAIR

What would you like to drink?

VIRGIL

Oh, what do you have?

MISS BLAIR

How about some Sherry? I have some very fine Sherry... What's the matter? Did you hurt your hand? Clumsy! I'll be right in.

NARRATOR

Disguising two sticks of dynamite as candles, he sends Miss Blair an anonymous gift. The plot fails however, as he makes the dynamite too thick to fit into the candlesticks. Determined to rid himself of the blackmailer, he rents a car and attempts to run her over.

MISS BLAIR

You know, I think somebody's trying to kill me.

VIRGIL

Oh! Don't be silly.

MISS BLAIR

When I came home from work last night, there was a car in my living room and it tried to run me over.

VIRGIL

A car? It must be your imagination.

MISS BLAIR

No.

VIRGIL

Who would try to kill you?

MISS BLAIR

I don't know. I have no enemies.

VIRGIL

You didn't tell anybody, did you?

MISS BLAIR

No. You can do the carving... Virgil! Can't you wait? I mean you eat like an animal.

VIRGIL

It's delicious, really.

MISS BLAIR

I'll get the salad dressing, we'll make a toast and then you start on that turkey leg... What are you doing in there?

VIRGIL

Oh, I'm just creating the proper atmosphere, dear.

MISS BLAIR

I'm a sucker for atmosphere.

VIRGIL

Why don't you carve the turkey.

MISS BLAIR

Yes, of course my darling. Someone sent these as a gift but they were too big to use, so I shaved off the bottom.

0:49:09

NARRATOR

With law enforcement agencies on his trail, Virgil takes his family and heads South. Here they manage to secure cheap lodging temporarily.

VIRGIL, *off*

This was really a desperate time of my life, you know. I... we had no money. I tried mugging old ladies but I got hit in the groin with a crutch. I didn't know what to do. I tried counterfeiting for a while. You know, I just got the plates all fouled up and

everything and Lincoln came out smoking a cigarette. I robbed a butcher shop. That was the best I could do. I got away with 116 veal cutlets. Then I had to go out and rob a tremendous amount of bread.

NARRATOR

Their money gone and with food scarce the Starkwells live like hunted animals.

INTERVIEWER

You weren't very happy then.

VIRGIL

Oh no, this was the low point of my existence. I was thinking of getting out of crime altogether, maybe becoming a singer or something.

INTERVIEWER

Must've been a very tough decision for you to make.

VIRGIL

Oh, yeah. It was really tough, but my family was starving and I'd already filed for bankruptcy, you know.

INTERVIEWER

I see. What prompted you to go on?

VIRGIL

Well, I came up with an idea for a robbery that was so fantastic and so brilliant that when it was over it was considered a real work of art by all the guys in my cellblock.

INTERVIEWER

They must've looked up to you.

VIRGIL

Well, you know, these guys are mugs.

VIRGIL, *to Louise*

I, uh, I'm gonna rob a bank.

LOUISE

Oh no, Virgil, not again!

VIRGIL

Yes, I think so. I think that's our only way out of this mess, is for me to... There's a little dinky bank in Ross County. And I think if I can get two or three good men, I can get in there and get it and we could go down to Mexico or up to Canada or...

LOUISE

But Virgil, what if you got killed?

VIRGIL

No, don't worry. Nothing to worry about. I know how to use a gub.

LOUISE

No, it's gun, Virgil.

VIRGIL

Gun, I'm sorry. Did I say 'gub' again?

LOUISE

Yes!

0:51:50

*Virgil contacts some men.*

VIRGIL

Don't turn around. I want to speak to you about a business proposition. It's a bank job. Couple of guys and myself are gonna get together about four weeks from now. Quarter of a million dollars. We walk in and take it like that. It's an easy job. Think we just pull up and take it. [*Virgil sees the two policemen*] How long have you been, uh... because I said part about the bank... the bank... You guys are dressing alike again... Oh, see, [*Virgil takes off his glasses and tramples*] I just broke it myself.

MOTHER

All the boys in the neighborhood went wrong. It wasn't his fault, we just didn't have time for him. We were working so hard.

FATHER

Would you like to see my stamp collection?

MOTHER

What do you mean stamp collection?

FATHER

I have collection of stamps...

0:52:56

NARRATOR

First, he selects an appropriate bank. Next he cases the bank by cleverly concealing a camera in an unsuspected place. That night, a meeting takes place. Among the one's chosen are some of the most sinister names in the underworld. William Ommers, wanted by the police for bank robbery, assault with a deadly weapon, murder, and getting naked in front of his in-laws. Frankie Wolf, wanted by Federal authorities for dancing with a mailman. Abie Armstrong, wanted all over the country for arson, robbery, assault with an attempt to kill, and marrying a horse.

VIRGIL

All right, boys. We're gonna talk about the Union Fidelity Bank. June 16th, 10 a.m. What you're about to see are films of the Union Fidelity Bank. We're gonna see it just once. Then to destroy the evidence we are going to eat the film. It'll be buffet style, you can just help yourselves. Take plates. There's potato salad over there and my wife made coffee. This film could save your lives.

*The session begins with a short: "Trout fishing in Quebec".*



WILLIAM, *complains*  
There's always a boring short.

LOUISE  
He'd have the gang over for meetings. I'd put out little trays of pretzels and bullets... I had to, he's my husband.

VIRGIL  
We got this film camera, we have lights, we got a truck. And the idea is we pull up in front of the bank and we look like we're making a movie. We play the actors. All we need is somebody to be the director.

FRANKIE  
Gertch! I got the perfect guy! An ex-con I did some time with, by the name of, um, Fritz.

FRITZ  
I'll be the director. I once was a film director, many years ago, before movies had sound. I worked with John Gilbert, Rudolph Valentino and Ruth and Gehrig [*Babe Ruth and Lou Gehrig*].

VIRGIL  
Ruth and Gehrig were baseball players.

FRITZ  
I was also bat boy for the Yankees... The fools in Hollywood, they didn't recognize genius. But now, I shall wear the uniform of a director once again and you will be my actor. You will enter in the bank and say, "Up with your hands, this is a stickup." Thereby announcing our theme. Men's greed. Now say it. Let me hear the lines.

VIRGIL  
Up with your hands, this is a stick up.

FRITZ  
No! More feeling. Again now.

VIRGIL  
Uh, Fritz, this is a bank robbery not a movie.

FRITZ  
Oh, yes, of course. Oh, forgive me. I will be fine, when the time comes. Thank you all. Everybody, take five.

0:56:12

*The day of the robbery.*

VIRGIL  
Oh, don't tell me you are gonna use the shower now.

LOUISE

Virgil, why do you do this to me every morning? I just got in here.

VIRGIL

Well, I'm going to be late for the robbery.

LOUISE

So you'll be five minutes late. They can start without you.

VIRGIL

They can't start without me! I'm the leader!

LOUISE

I made you some coffee.

VIRGIL

Oh! Jesus! Every, every day I have trouble getting in the bathroom. For crying out loud!

LOUISE

Honey, what shirt do you wanna wear?

VIRGIL

What'd you say?

LOUISE

I said, what shirt do you wanna wear?

VIRGIL

I'm gonna wear my light blue.

LOUISE

No, you're not. It was dirty, I washed it last night.

VIRGIL

Why did you wash it? I was gonna wear it today.

LOUISE

I washed it because it was dirty.

VIRGIL

And so what? I'm just gonna rob a bank.

LOUISE

I have happened to have ironed your beige shirt. Do you wanna wear that?

VIRGIL

No, I can't wear a beige shirt to a bank robbery.

LOUISE

Why not?

VIRGIL

Because it's light. I'll be an easy target.

LOUISE

I think it is a perfectly good shirt to wear.

VIRGIL

No, it isn't a good shirt, it's beige. Who wears beige to a bank robbery?

LOUISE

What are the other guys wearing?

VIRGIL

I don't know... For crying out loud.

LOUISE

Why don't you call them up and ask them?

VIRGIL

Oh, nobody is going to be wearing beige to a bank robbery. It's in poor taste.

NARRATOR

June 16, 9 a.m. The days of planning are over. Virgil and his accomplices depart from his hideout and proceed toward their destination.

ROBBER

Everybody get your hands up, this is a stickup!... [*To Virgil's gang*] Hey, what are you doing here?

VIRGIL

We're holding up the bank.

ROBBER

We are holding up the bank.

VIRGIL

Oh no, I'm sorry, we are holding up the bank.

ROBBER

We're holding up the bank.

VIRGIL

Oh no, we were here first. Look, could you come back tomorrow? We'll be finished by then.

ROBBER

We've been planning this for months. We're not gonna have it ruined by a jackass.

VIRGIL

Alright, we'll take a vote. How many people here would like to be held up by this group? [*Big applause*] Now how many people would like to be held up by our group? [*Small applause*]

ROBBER  
Now, beat it!

FRITZ  
You call this a bank robbery? I yelled action five minutes ago. [*To the robber*] Is this the way to pick up money?

ROBBER 2, *enters*  
What's going on in here? There's a million cops outside.

VIRGIL  
Let's get out of here!

NARRATOR  
Each member of the gang gets five years for his part in the crime. Virgil gets ten. He is taken not to prison this time but to a road gang where his criminal behavior will cost him dearly.

*Ross County Correction Farm.*

CHIEF  
You men come here because you committed crimes rendering you unfit to live in decent society. That's too bad. I think you're gonna find you made a mistake you're gonna regret. Our job, mine and the boys, is to see that you get some civilization in you so that when you leave here you're gonna think twice about performing antisocial acts. And my advice to you is obey the rules and do your job. If you got any complaints, you come to me. There ain't nobody on the outside gonna help you. Now we don't like complainers and we don't like troublemakers. If things get a little too rough for you in here, you're just free to take off for Florida. Show'em in which direction Florida is, boys. Any questions?

VIRGIL  
Do you think a girl should pet on the first date?

CHIEF  
What?

VIRGIL  
I... I mean if both parties involved are mature and liberal.

*Stone quarry.*

BLACK PRISONER, *sings*  
Gonna see Miss Liza... Gonna go to Mississippi... Gonna see Miss Liza... Gonna go to Mississippi...

VIRGIL, *sings*  
Gonna see Miss Liza... Gonna go to Mississippi...

VIRGIL, *to the black prisoner*  
Hey, do you think you gotta good enough aim for that hammer to knock these bracelets off me?

BLACK MAN

Look man, I don't want no trouble.

VIRGIL

Nothing's gonna happen. You think you can do it?

BLACK MAN

I've never missed yet.

VIRGIL

Alright, go ahead.

BLACK MAN

Sorry man, first time.

NARRATOR

Food on a chain gang is scarce and not very nourishing. The men get one hot meal a day. A bowl of steam.

CHIEF

Alright boys, who didn't give me a good days of work?

GUARD

Come with us Wilson!

CHIEF

What's the matter Starkwell, can't you take it? Come on, I want you to see this, so you'll know what you got to look forward to... Just what in the hell do you think you're doing?

GUARD

What do you mean?

CHIEF

Don't beat the shadow, you damn fool. Beat him.

GUARD

Oh, him!

CHIEF

Jesus!

NARRATOR

The time drags by in an endless grind of backbreaking labor. Brutal discipline is common under the hot sun. The men aren't even permitted to faint without written permission. Virgil complains and he is severely tortured. For several days he is locked in a sweatbox with an insurance salesman.

INSURANCE SALESMAN

Hi, I'm Joe Green, I represent the Ajax-Widget Insurance Company. I'd like to talk to you about our insurance... You're about 30, right? You know, I think the best thing to

do is to get straight life plus a little term and... How about dental and medical? We've got this major medical. It's a good deal.

NARRATOR

At the end of each work day, the men are chained to each other by the ankle, in group of six. Making movement slow and painful and escape impossible. Then one day, the impossible is attempted.

CONVICT

See that field? If we make it across that field, we'd be out of here. We can take them by surprise if we all suddenly make a break for it.

VIRGIL

You're crazy.

CONVICT

That's right, I'm a paranoid schizophrenic, but I say we try it. Ain't that right boys?

CONVICTS

Right.

*A chain gang of six men escapes. Virgil is one of them. The guards shot.*

VIRGIL

I'm not with them, I wanted to stay!

CONVICT

Alright, everyone split up!

1:07:40

*The fugitives finds a farm. An old woman opens the door.*

VIRGIL

My car broke down, can I use your telephone?

FARMER

Of course, come in.

CONVICT

Okay. Now, we're going to get out of here. I know a guy in town who's got enough tools to get us out of these chains. [*Police knocks. The convict to the farmer*] Alright, now you act natural and answer it or you're finished.

FARMER

Who is it?

POLICE

Patrolman Lynch, can I come in?

FARMER

Well, not now.

POLICE

It's an emergency. I'm afraid I have to.

VIRGIL

You'd better untie her. Tell him we're your cousins. We are visiting you from out of town.

CONVICT

Alright, one false move and you're finished.

FARMER

What is it?

POLICE, *coming in*

I hear there's been some trouble up at the prison. I'm checking the area for anything suspicious.

FARMER

These are my cousins. They're visiting me for the holiday.

POLICE

What holiday?

VIRGIL

You ever heard of St. Abernathy's Day?

POLICE

No.

VIRGIL

That's what we're here for.

POLICE

Come here you. Come here! Do you think your cousin is safe here living all alone? Look how close we are to the prison. Look out here, it's just a few miles down the road. Come here! I don't know. You sure can't be sure when you live so close to a prison. Hey, wait a minute! Did I see something move out there?

CONVICT

You couldn't have!

POLICE

I'm sure I saw something move. Quick! Everybody take one window and check it. If there's somebody out there, we'll have a chance to see him. Guess it must have been my imagination.

*One of the convicts whispers something to the ringleader.*

CONVICT

Now? [*To the patrolman*] Excuse us.

*The convicts go into the toilet. The old woman tells the patrolman.*

FARMER

They're escaped convicts.

POLICE

Really?

FARMER

They've broken in. Didn't you notice how they all moved together closely? They're chained together at the ankles.

POLICE

I thought they were just a close family. Okay, boys, the game's up.

CONVICT

The old lady must have told.

POLICE

You're going back to that prison. And this time, you're going to stay there.

CONVICT

Where we gonna go? We need tools.

VIRGIL

Let's get my wife. She'll help us out of this.

*1:10:50*

LOUISE

Oh Virgil. If you'd only listened to me and gone straight.

VIRGIL

Honey, we needed the money and I robbed a bank.

LOUISE

Virgil, when are you going to stop doing that? Don't you realize you're a father and you have responsibilities?

CONVICT

Well, if she's my wife, I'd belt her one.

VIRGIL

Do you mind keeping out of this, please? I don't wanna discuss it unless we're alone.

LOUISE

Well, I wanna discuss it now! Alright, you don't wanna discuss it alone. Okay.

VIRGIL

Where are you going?

LOUISE



I'm going to the next room to talk about it right now!

VIRGIL

I can't come in alone! I'm chained to the...! We can't be alone unless we go some place where they got some tools or something. These guys are with me for good now.

LOUISE

How do you think I feel? I'm a young woman sleeping alone here every night.

VIRGIL

Darling, look...!

LOUISE

Don't you think that means something to me? How do you think I feel? I think back to the days when you were in the Philharmonic.

VIRGIL

I was never in the Philharmonic!

LOUISE

You used to lie in bed...

VIRGIL

Shut up!

LOUISE

... and you used to make love to me... and you used to recite poetry and...

CONVICT

Poetry?

CONVICT 2

Hey, Longfellow!

LOUISE

And play with that doll you got me...

VIRGIL

Darling, look... You guys look away for a minute... Sweet heart, don't you know that whatever happens you're always gonna mean the same to me. You... would you stop giggling? You'd always mean the sun and the earth and the moon to me.

CONVICT

Oh Christ!

NARRATOR

With Louise's help, the chains are removed from Virgil's ankle. Once more the family takes flight. Feeling guilty about their son's education, Louise tries tutoring him.

LOUISE

He's been very depressed. I think... I think if he'd been a successful criminal he would've felt better. You know he never made the "Ten Most Wanted" list. It's very unfair voting. It's who you know.

NARRATOR

Virgil Starkwell embarks on a series of crimes that make him a wanted desperado. Here he attempts to rob the vault of a bank but finds a family of gypsies are living there. By the end of six months the FBI regard Virgil as a menace. Although he does not make the "Ten Most Wanted" list, he does win "Gangster of the year" award and is asked to speak at many luncheons and universities. For the end of this story, we spoke to Mr. Daniel Miller, an FBI agent and author of the book "Mother was a Red".

DANIEL MILLER

The FBI actually wanted Virgil very badly. Mr. Hoover was quite upset by Mr. Starkwell and his activities. In fact, he confided to me on several occasions... uh... I can remember one very well. After a bowling match, on a Thursday night on which he said he couldn't sleep nights, he was smoking a little too much. And um, he thought that this, uh... this criminal, as he put it, might very well be part of a subversive plot. Obviously, uh, an atheist and, uh, a pinko, and trying in general to disturb our society. We finally traced him to a cheap neighborhood down on the lower east side of New York where he was living at the time in a very sleazy run down tenement house.

ROOMMATE

Virge? I remember him. I used to live with him as a matter of fact, in the same rooming house that is. One day he told me he was a gynecologist. He couldn't speak no foreign languages... Who was he kidding? I thought I saw his picture on a post office. I didn't remember wether it was on the wall or on a stamp.

INTERVIEWER

Do you remember Virgil?

KAY LEWIS

Oh, yeah.

INTERVIEWER

What was he like?

KAY LEWIS

Well, I don't know. I think he's brilliant. I mean he's just absolutely brilliant. When I just found out that he was a criminal, I just couldn't believe it... I just thought I was gonna die. Cause he just was the best cover up job I have ever seen in my life. I mean unbelievable acting job. I actually believed that he was an idiot. I mean I really believed it... And I wasn't the only one like everybody thought so... Everyone just thought he was a schlemiel and it turns out that he's a criminal. Just to think that... that idiot was a criminal I just can't believe it. I mean you never met anybody like this in your life... You've never met such a nothing. I can't believe it. That there was a mind working in there. That could rob banks. It's phenomenal. Phenomenal.

INTERVIEWER

Thank you...

KAY LEWIS

You know? Once... Once I said to him what do you do he said, uh, I rob banks. Go know? Right.

DANIEL MILLER

But we finally caught up to him. Oh I think it was April 11<sup>th</sup>... We finally captured Virgil under sort of very odd circumstances, uh, an amateur photographer happened to be there at the time. And, um, took the only known films of his capture.

STANLEY KRIM, *cretin*

I was coming down here. This is the spot where it actually happened. You see, as a matter of fact, I just brought my pants into the cleaners and I was sort of angry with them because last time I brought 'em in I asked them to sew a button on and they hadn't.

INTERVIEWER

Will you get to the point?

STANLEY KRIM, *cretin*

Oh yes, well... I'll tell you exactly what happened this morning, uh, with me... and about the camera. Well, back to this thing in which I became known merely because of what had happened and I had the camera. I was having breakfast in the morning. I think it was two fried eggs, toasts and juice... I don't know wether it was orange or grape fruit... but I remember I had a juice, uh... At that time... It was orange juice, that's right.

INTERVIEWER

Will you get to the point!

DANIEL MILLER

In fact, I got 'em right here. I'd like to show them to you. The very last films of Virgil Starkwell being captured by the FBI.

VIRGIL

All right, get your hands up, it's a stickup!

EDDIE HAYNES

Hey, I know you... Virgil Starkwell, that's right.

VIRGIL

Oh, Eddie? What... Haynes?

EDDIE HAYNES

That's right! We were in the marching band together. You played the cello... you were always... I was trombone... first trombone.

VIRGIL

Isn't that funny? My God!

EDDIE HAYNES

What are you doing?

VIRGIL

I'm with the Philharmonic.

EDDIE HAYNES

No kidding, that's great! I was just talking to someone... Oscar Sunkin, about the great times we had together, remember?

VIRGIL

Then was hilarious!

EDDIE HAYNES

You remember when we got caught taking a shower in the girls' locker room?

VIRGIL

I do... You know, I never saw anybody so embarrassed.

EDDIE HAYNES

I'll never forget your face.

VIRGIL

My face? You dropped the towel.

EDDIE HAYNES

You dropped the towel too!

*[They laugh]*

VIRGIL

Let me have your watch, will you?

EDDIE HAYNES

Oh yeas, sure, sure. Remember that we painted the car, uh, yellow?

VIRGIL

Right, on Halloween.

EDDIE HAYNES

That's right, it was Halloween. It was really funny.

VIRGIL

It was yellow stripes.

EDDIE HAYNES

That's right, like a barber pole.

VIRGIL

Keep your hands up or I'll have to shoot you.

EDDIE HAYNES

Oh, yeah, sure.

VIRGIL

Jesus, remember the football game?

EDDIE HAYNES

You fumbled the last play.

VIRGIL

And you picked up the ball and ran with it.

EDDIE HAYNES

And then I ran the wrong way, and everybody was yelling go back, go back. And I thought they were cheering.

VIRGIL

You can't beat the good old days.

EDDIE HAYNES

No, or the good old nights... Shirley Sistrin, remember?

VIRGIL

Wallet... Wallet.

EDDIE HAYNES

Oh, I didn't hear you.

VIRGIL

Look, it's been great speaking to you, really.

EDDIE HAYNES

It's been nice to see you too, Virgil.

VIRGIL

Yeah, you too. Take it easy. Maybe I'll see you again.

EDDIE HAYNES

Best of luck to you! Oh Virgil, I just realized that I'm a cop.

VIRGIL

No kidding. How's it going?

EDDIE HAYNES

It's a great job. I get a pension and I...

VIRGIL

Do you remember when...?

NARRATOR

Virgil Starkwell is tried on 52 accounts of robbery and is sentenced to 800 years in federal prison. At the trial, he tells his lawyer confidently, that with good behavior he can cut the sentence in half.

INTERVIEWER

Virgil, now that you're caught and you're facing a very long prison sentence, do you have any regrets about choosing a life of crime?

VIRGIL

I think that crime definitely pays. And that, uh, you know, it's a great job. The hours are good and you're your own boss and you travel a lot and you get to meet interesting people. I just think it's a good job in general.

INTERVIEWER

What about your cohorts? What ever happened to them? All of the guys you've been associated with in various gangs?

VIRGIL

A great many of them have become homosexuals and some of them have entered into politics and sports.

INTERVIEWER

How do you manage to spend your time in prison? Do you have any hobbies or anything?

VIRGIL

I do, I've been working on... I've been doing a lot of stuff in shop actually... And I'm very skilled with my hands... Do you know if it's raining out?

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