

Joe Destruction

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“Joe Destruction in the Case of the Spanked Senator”

CHARACTERS:

FRANCIS is an Irish city cop. A flake, excitable.

ALAN LEWYA is a new-age preacher, overly gregarious, always smiley and laughing.

NANNY HAWKINS is a cute little old lady.

VIDEO: Black

JOE: I woke up. I felt my forehead. Sweat. I felt my chin. Two days of growth. I threw off my blanket, realized it was really my trench coat, and then also remembered I was in yesterday's clothes. Cool. I was getting the hang of this private eye thing. Only problem was, it was pitch-black but it had to be morning by now. Hold on. I'm a private eye, I told myself, I can figure this out. After working on it for awhile, I got it: My eyes were closed.

VIDEO: Eyes opening, from the eyes' perspective, looking at the room or over a belly over a pair of shoes.

JOE: Echoing in my head, I heard the words of my little league baseball coach.

COACH: Open your eyes, dummy!

VIDEO: Kid from fly ball's angle, glove shoved into the air, eyes tightly shut: He's afraid of the ball.

JOE: He'd usually say this just before I got hit with a fly ball.

VIDEO: Kid lying on ground, out cold, baseball next to his head.

JOE: I got somebody I'd like you to meet. Me. Name's Joe. Joe Destruction.

(SFX: Explosion)

SING: Joe Destruction!

NARR: They call me Joe Destruction because I have this habit of gettin' blown up. Besides, it's a little more catchy than "Smith."

I left my seedy, inner-city apartment, looked for my large, seedy American car. It wasn't where I left it. I knew it wasn't stolen. There ain't many people left in my seedy inner-city neighborhood, but the ones still here have pride. They see my car as an eyesore, so they take it once or twice a week and hide it somewhere, hoping I don't find it. God bless 'em. It took me about 20 minutes, but I found my car covered with a camouflage net and a bunch of last fall's slimy leaves. I had to give the neighbors credit. Not a bad job.

OLD GUY NEIGHBOR: He found it again!

OLD WOMAN: I told you we shoulda pushed it in the river.

JOE: You already tried that.

BOTH: Oh ... yeah.

NARR: My car had washed up a quarter mile downstream. It was kinda like even the river didn't want it and kinda hawked it up. As usual, my car wasn't running, but it was nice to know where it was everyday, anyway.

I heard the telltale swoosh of a wire-guided rocket, but it was too late for me to get outta the way.

VIDEO: Rocket hits Joe in the stomach and propels him into a building whereupon it blows up. Seconds pass, then Joe extracts himself from the rubble. Joe taps his chest with his fist, burps.

NARR: Somebody tryin' to blow me up. Same old, same old in my part of town. Well, no sense sticking around. It wasn't like the cops were gonna show up. They hadn't come to this neighborhood in ten years—not since the time the riot squad got ambushed. Naw, nobody got hurt, but by the time they got back to their cop vehicles, they'd been stripped down to nothing. Turns out the whole thing was staged by the auto shop kids at the vo-tech center. Budget cuts left 'em without any supplies, so they needed car parts. Cops had to walk nearly three miles back uptown. It nearly killed 'em.

VIDEO: Action footage or still of fat cops looking exhausted as they trudge along the sidewalk.

NARR: Anyway, for all I knew, whoever shot the missile might not even have been aiming at me. Like they say, guns don't kill people; people with guns kill people who don't have bigger guns than them. Or something like that. I ain't big on politics. I'm just glad I'm hard to blow up.

VIDEO: Joe, continuing on his way, encounters Profane Beth, who is smoking a stogie.

BETH: You want a piece of me? You want a piece of me?

JOE: Naw, thanks.

BETH: How about a poem?

JOE: No, thanks, I gotta be someplace.

BETH: I know something you don't know.

JOE: How do you know what I don't know?

BETH: Because if you knew what I knew you would know not to stand where you're standing right now.

JOE: Huh?

VIDEO: Beth steps out of the way as a missile hits Joe and explodes. Joe picks himself out of the rubble and sneezes.

BETH: Told ya.

JOE: I am never going to be on time at this rate.

TRANSITION

NARR: Some people are naturals at a lot of things. I ain't one of 'em. But as long as I can remember, I have had one skill. It seems I'm really tough to blow up. Well, that's not all. I also can't be electrocuted, stomped, crushed, pureed, creamed, or snapped in two. I found out that last one in my last caper when I met up with two karate guys. Boy, were they pissed.

I mean, sometimes when an explosion goes off real close, my ears will ring a little and I think dynamite in particular makes me sneeze. But all in all I'm OK. Maybe I got toughened up as a kid, when my big brother and his friend used to try and make me the first boy in space.

VIDEO: Joe as a child, fat, wide-eyed, strapped to a bunch of toy rockets

VIDEO: Explosion

SFX: Explosion

NARR: I was twelve before I figured out they were lying when they told me they were NASA scientists. When I got my first real job as a clerk in the Kwikie Drug, I got volunteered for the job of mopping up the sidewalk after a big storm.

VIDEO: Still of power lines down, Joe blowing up.

NARR: Then I was working as a bank teller when one day crooks came in and blew the vault. I was blown clean through the plate glass windows and out into the street where I bounced three times, got hit by a car, rolled over by a paver and walked on by four guys wearing golf spikes.

VIDEO: Garishly-garbed golf guys stepping on Joe, looking in four directions.

GOLF GUY: Now, WHERE did that ball go?

NARR: I was all right. That's when I decided to get into a different line of work. After extensive computerized career counseling and a correspondence course--

VIDEO: On chalkboard: How to be a Private Eye 101.

VIDEO: Still of a large group of trench-coat clad people, men and women, throwing fedoras into the air.

NARR: --I decided to put my one strong skill--gettin' blown up—to use, as a detective. Hey, it was either this or look for leftover mines in Cambodia. That's how I got where I am today. See, I figure a guy who can't be blown up don't necessarily need brains. What he needs is persistence, and I got that.

(PAUSE)

JOE: So, that's my life story. What do you think?

OFFICER: Well, Mr. Destruction, as a private individual, I find your story compelling, fascinating, and I'll admit, very odd. But as the bank's small business lending officer,

VIDEO: Shot of the officer, a small man.

OFFICER: I'm not certain we can list "Difficult to blow up" under your assets. We're looking more for things such as material goods of some worth which can serve as collateral.

JOE: I mentioned my car. Heh, heh, if you can find it. Heh, heh.

SILENCE

VIDEO: Bank officer staring blankly.

JOE: Ahem.

OFFICER: No, I'm afraid we won't be able to grant you a loan for your private eye business at this time.

JOE: Can I keep this nifty pen with the bank's name on it?

OFFICER: (Pause) No.

JOE: Thanks for your time.

OFFICER: Remember, at First Conglomerated City Bank--

(SFX: Phone Ring)

OFFICER: Yes? Whoops, make that the First Conglomerated Continental Bank. We've been bought again. Remember, at the First Conglomerated Continental Bank, we treasure your business. Keep the pen; we'll be getting new ones.

NARR: I was halfway to work already, so I decided to skip the bus and walk the rest of the way. I needed to be frugal now more than ever. I knew it was being a little hopeful, but I was kind of counting on that loan for lunch.

VIDEO: Hot sun.

NARR: It was hot. Hot like being stuck between a sauna tile and the butt of one of those big pasty-white Russian women you see in Time Magazine. Yeah, it was pretty uncomfortable. Warm and icky, kind of like my analogy. I liked my analogy, though, and made a mental note to remember that one.

I wore my trench coat anyway. I figured anyone wearing a trench coat in this weather wouldn't be hassled for spare change. In fact, it was kinda the opposite. Every time I paused a moment to take off my hat and wipe the sweat off my forehead, people were tossing change into it. I kept it. Hell, I could use the money.

I needed some work. I had exactly one case. An elderly couple who wanted me to find somebody. Missing person-- no problem, you're thinking. Problem was, that somebody was God.

VIDEO: Old couple holding a picture of God, clouds and rays in background.

NARR: They were real nice about it. Told me to take my time. I was tempted to tell 'em if I took enough time, they'd be seeing him anyway. But, heck, it's a job. I walked up stairs, pushed open my door that had been off one hinge for months.

(SFX: Door falling with a crash)

BILLY: Good morning, sir!

JOE: Hey, Billy. Any calls?

BILLY: Yes, we had a couple! (SINGS) Allelujah!

JOE: Who?

BILLY: Well, The First Conglomerated Continental Bank called to say that since you left they've been bought again and are now the First Conglomerated Universal Bank, but you still can't have any money.

JOE: Looks like I'll have to hit up mom again. Every time I do it's the same thing: Joey, do I look

like a bank? I say, no, ma, maybe you put on some weight, but you don't look like no bank.

BILLY: Good thing, or the First Conglomerated might buy her. By the way, how's the search for God going?

JOE: Met a guy on the corner who claims he pitches pennies with him every Saturday. If I buy him dinner, he'll tell me more. If I can expense it, I'll consider it.

BILLY: Not so well, huh?

JOE: Nah.

BILLY: Well, if I hear anything about the whereabouts of the Almighty, I'll let you know.

(SFX: Tires squealing. Gun shots.)

JOE: Uh-oh, better get down, Billy. Whose turn is it today?

BILLY: Well, let's see. Monday's drive-by shooting is the beanie scouts, Tuesday the ladies from Goodwill, Wednesday it's—

JOE: Today's Wednesday. Kids raising money for a class trip. Talk about a hard sell.

VIDEO: Joe punches out the window glass with his elbow.

(SFX: Crash of glass)

JOE: (SHOUTING) You wanna go to Belize so bad, you swim there!

SFX: Machine gun fire.

VIDEO: Bullets rake through the window and wall.

JOE: Well, looky there, the kids got themselves a tail-gunner on that station wagon. Turret and everything. Pretty cool. (YELLING TO KIDS) Yeah, come back when you got some real firepower.

SFX: Tires squeal and car recedes into distance.

BILLY: Just a thought, sir, but giving a donation would be one way to avoid getting the office riddled with bullets on an almost-daily basis.

JOE: Nah, I like their persistence. Besides, kids nowadays, they get everything handed to 'em. It's important to make 'em work for things, makes 'em appreciate it more.

BILLY: Well, it looks like I'll have to buy a new window, AGAIN.

JOE: Hey, they shot first.

BILLY: Well, I don't see why you have to break out the window glass with your own elbow just to shout back. You could just open it, you know.

JOE: Any other messages?

BILLY: Just one. You got a call from your old friend sergeant Francis McNulty.

NARR: Francis was my old buddy on the police force. Actually, I was still so new to the PI biz that I didn't have any old police buddies. But I knew any hardboiled detective had to have a handful of critical items and a friend on the police force was one of 'em. So I'd hired Francis to be my old police buddy. For an extra ten bucks a month, I could call him Frank, but I didn't have the dough. So Francis it was. I was also working on hiring a police commissioner who'd always be telling me to butt out of cases and let the cops do their job. But I'd need that small business loan first.

VIDEO: Split screen, Joe on one half, Francis on the other.

JOE: Yo, Francis, Destruction here.

FRANCIS: Will you stop being so damn cheap and just pay the extra dough to call me Frank?

JOE: I will, I promise.

FRANCIS: I should never have come up with that idea about the extra ten bucks. I hate that "Francis." My grandmother calls me Francis.

JOE: Whatta ya got?

FRANCIS: A homicide. I think you better come down to the state house.

JOE: Francis, dead clients don't pay all that well.

FRANCIS: Yeah, well, if you crack this one, you'll be on your way, Mr. De--I mean, old buddy.

JOE: Be right there.

TRANSITION

JOE: Looks like I'm going for another long walk.

BETH: (From the street below) Cars stink! Everybody drives, what the hell's that all about? Particulate matter, very, very bad!

BILLY: Ooh, new friend, Joe?

JOE: Name's Profane Beth. I think she either wants to date me or kill me. Or, something.

BETH: Nah, you're just one of my favorite people to harass! Car lover!

JOE: Lucky me.

BILLY: Has good hearing, doesn't she? Anyway, I'll drive you, Joe!

JOE: You? You don't even own a car.

BILLY: Au contraire, mon fraire!

JOE: Billy, you're the basic, all-natural enviro-nut; what're you doing with a car?

BILLY: It's solar-powered and made from recycled plastic kitchen trash bags. It smells a bit like old lettuce, but she's a fast machine. I get up to 25 mph on the expressway.

JOE: I bet you make lots of friends. But, any port in a storm. Let's go.

TRANSITION

NARR: I learned a lot more about Billy's car in the short ride to the state house. Like, whenever the sun went behind a cloud or we went into a tunnel, the car would stop. Outta gas, so to speak. Turns out, though, the car's designed for the city.

VIDEO: Joe and Billy, Joe absolutely crammed into car, head askew.

BILLY: Right! With superbumpers!

(SFX: BAM!)

NARR: Right. Quadruple-reinforced (BAM!) bumpers so that frustrated drivers could (BAM!) slam us from one end of (BAM!) the tunnel to the other.

BILLY: We rely on the (BAM!) kindness of strangers to ram us to wherever we (BAM!) need to go!

(SFX: Car horns in a tunnel)

BILLY: (Getting slammed) You can always--count on good people--to help you--out, you know, Joe?

JOE: Yeah, but we're not getting rammed anymore, and we're still in the middle of the tunnel.

BILLY: Just flip them the bird. That always works for me!

(SFX: Bam!)

BILLY: Like clockwork!

NARR: It took about twice as long as walking, but eventually we got there.

TRANSITION

JOE: Whatta ya got, Francis?

FRANCIS: This is the honorable Senator William Martin Gagne.

VIDEO: Gagne--short, red-headed, mustached, smiling, but dead, with his pants down.

JOE: The youngest member of the famous political family.

FRANCIS: Yep.

JOE: Little Willy Gagne

FRANCIS: Party Hearty Marty. Known for short stature, short tempers, short love affairs.

JOE: Boy, I've never seen him with his pants down.

FRANCIS: You're in the minority.

VIDEO: Still of Gagne--short, red-headed, mustached, pants down, partying with bimbos.

FRANCIS: It's rumored he was going to enter the presidential race.

JOE: Not in this shape, he ain't. What happened?

FRANCIS: Well, the nearest we can figure, he was--spanked to death.

JOE: Spanked?

FRANCIS: Slap marks are all over the man's butt. And this--

JOE: A note. (Reading) "Hello, World. By the time you see this, I will have spanked myself to death. There's no need to try and revive me if I'm not quite spanked out."

FRANCIS: His wallet's missing, too.

JOE: Could mean three things. One, a robbery attempt that got out of hand. Two, the wallet could've been removed for more effective spanking, either by an assailant or by Gagne himself. Or three--

FRANCIS: I knew you were gonna say it! A serial spanker! Or gang-spankers! Oh, Lard, serial gang-spankers running amok in the city! Chaos! Doom! Pull up your pants and flee for your lives!

JOE: Francis.

FRANCIS: Yes?

JOE: That wasn't the third thing.

FRANCIS: Oh, holy mother, that's a relief.

JOE: Or three--someone wanted to make murder LOOK like a robbery attempt.

FRANCIS: The coroner's report should be a big help.

JOE: I have to wonder if this was really a suicide.

FRANCIS: How come?

JOE: I can't imagine a guy being able to do it to himself. Or a guy writing his own suicide note in cut-out letters.

VIDEO: Suicide note in newspaper and magazine letters.

FRANCIS: Well, what if he had a big sort of automatic spanking machine, say, that he folded up and kept in a closet, you know.

JOE: An automatic spanking machine?

FRANCIS: Sure, one that could, you know, spank say, indefinitely, or till whenever you think you've had enough.

JOE: Really?

FRANCIS: Yeah, I mean, not like I've never, like, seen one, but you know--

BILLY: Folds up in your closet?

FRANCIS: Well, yeah, I mean--oh, forget it.

JOE: Francis ... would it be OK if I called you Frank for just a while?

FRANCIS: ... Sure.

JOE: Frank. Listen, Frankie. (Playing around) Frankie SpankEEE. Heh, heh. Don't it seem to go against all the laws of nature, man and simple biomechanics, a man spanking himself to death?

BILLY: Maybe you'd spank yourself for a while, but certainly not to the death.

(SFX: Smack!)

VIDEO: Billy smacks himself in the butt.

BILLY: Ooh! No, not to the death, you wouldn't.

JOE: Did you dust for prints?

FRANCIS: Dust?

JOE: Yeah. Dust for prints. You know. If they're his prints, maybe he did do it.

FRANCIS: Now, hold on, Destruction. I've done a lot of things in my police career, including suffering my share of indignities as befitting a good-natured Irishman on the Metropolitan police force.

VIDEO: Photo of Francis being hung upside down by other cops, or whatever. Then being dressed up as the New Year's baby. Then a blindfolded leprechaun during a hazing ceremony.

FRANCIS: But I never have and am not about to start dustin' a man's arse for his own fingerprints.

JOE: I guess you're right. We'll go with your theory about the automatic spanking machine.

FRANCIS: I'll get me kit.

JOE: Call me when you've got the coroner's report, OK, ... Frankie?

FRANCIS: Don't push it, Destruction.

NARR: I gave Billy an assignment--check out every hotel in town for Japanese tourists. Two reasons; number one, I had a hunch, and number two, if I sent him in another direction, I wouldn't feel obligated to ride back to the office in his eco-mobile. I picked up the daily newspaper on my walk back.

VIDEO: (Headline:) Drive-By Spankings Latest City Scourge! (Sub-headline: Senator Cut Down in Prime of Life.)

NARR: Looked like Francis had been talking to the papers already.

VIDEO: A small robot which looks just like Joe approaches Joe.

ROBOT: Hello, I am Little Joe. Pleased to meet you.

JOE: Well, ain't that cute. He looks just like—

ROBOT: Shake my hand—

JOE: Well, OK, I—

VIDEO: Joe bends to shake Little Joe's hand and the robot laughs and blows up.

JOE: (from inside a pile of rubble) OK, now I'm thinking this is more than a coincidence.

NARR: When I walked into the office, the scent of perfume cut through the musty air like a jet ski through terrified swimmers. It stung my nostrils, particularly my left one.

VIDEO: Sultry woman lounging languorously across Joe's desk.

JOE: She lounged languorously across my desk. I did pretty good with my last analogy and thought I might be on a roll, so I tried again: Her curves reminded me of the Himalayas. I wondered to myself if the Himalayas were nice, round mountains or the sharp, spiky kind.

VIDEO: Two quick pictures of the same woman: One curvaceous, maybe with goats grazing on her snow-capped curves. Then, woman with spiky curves and sharp edges, with Madonna bra.

WOMAN: Time's up.

JOE: Huh?

WOMAN: You only hired me for thirty seconds to lounge languorously across your desk.

JOE: Yeah, that's all the money I got.

WOMAN: If I were you, I'd use my time better.

JOE: Like maybe make up a plot line to go with why you came in and lounged languorously across my desk? Like, maybe you're an old girlfriend, or an arch-villain-ess.

WOMAN: Hey, it's your dime, buddy. By the way, the Himalayas are on the spiky side.

JOE: Thanks. I'm still working on my analogies. ... So, how come you're not leaving?

WOMAN: I'd like to, but I'm stuck to your desk. What, do you eat here?

JOE: Sometimes I sleep there, too.

WOMAN: This will definitely cost you more next time.

(SFX: Phone rings)

JOE: I'll get that.

WOMAN: Well, I'm not about to.

JOE: Destruction here.

FRANCIS: Frank--I mean, Francis here.

JOE: Yeah, Francis.

FRANCIS: By the way, that'll be Sergeant McNulty to you.

JOE: You musta found something good.

FRANCIS: Apparently a couple of boys from the precinct responded to an alarm last night at a warehouse.

JOE: A break-in?

FRANCIS: Yeah, and guess what they stole?

JOE: I dunno, Francis.

FRANCIS: A spanking machine.

JOE: A real life spanking machine.

FRANCIS: The warehouse is full of 'em. The boys found something else there, too--Senator Gagne's wallet. The warehouse belongs to a place called the Church of Eternal Spanktification.

JOE: Spanktification? As in spanking?

FRANCIS: We're checking it out.

JOE: Thanks, Francis. Listen, sorry about the--you know...

FRANCIS: Sometimes ye have to learn to trust an old cop's instincts, Destruction. And when a man speculates on the existence of such a thing as a spanking machine, it don't mean he keeps one in the hall closet. Sometimes it means he's been around a lot of years and seen a lot of things. Like the aliens I seen that time climbing into their spaceship after stealin' fudgesicles from an ice cream truck. Oh, sure, they didn't believe me then, either. Or the time I seen Elvis, oh, sure I did, or leprechauns; sure, they said I was drunk, but it takes more than a bottle o' Jamieson to cloud my--

JOE: Yeah, I, uh, gotta go, Francis.

(SFX: Hangs up while Francis is still talking)

NARR: I decided to go for a walk.

SFX: Door slams. Joe obviously has forgotten the woman.

VIDEO: Mid-long-shot through the exterior window, we see the woman on the desk.

WOMAN: Hey, where are you going? What about me?

NARR: There was something familiar about the idea of spanking, and it wasn't just because my ma still occasionally came by the office to smack my butt.

VIDEO: Joe.

JOE: Aw, come on, ma, I'm a grown man.

MOM: I told you to get a real job, Joey. Now get over here.

JOE: (As though shuddering at the memory) Eeesh.

NARR: Luck is a funny thing. Sometimes you just get some. You don't question where it came from, or why you deserved it, and you don't tell no one you got it, just let 'em assume you done something right. When you get luck, if you're smart, you just sorta grab it and shove it under your coat and hurry off.

As I was walking along, a guy shoved a leaflet into my hand. At first I considered this good luck because I was looking for something to blow my nose with. But as I raised it up to my nose, I got even better luck than that. It was a leaflet from the Church of Eternal Spanktification. What was the Church of Eternal Spanktification, and how could I learn more? At that moment, a guy walked by with a boom box.

RADIO: (Church music) Have you been feeling naughty? You're not alone. Spanktify yourself at the Church of Eternal Spanktification, where we acknowledge our naughtiness, spank ourselves, and feel just great about it. A message from the Church of Eternal Spanktification, with 27 convenient locations, including 10 drive-through spanking centers.

NARR: The Church of Eternal Spanktification. Hmmm. But where was it? I needed to find out that information before I could--just then a bus stopped in traffic beside me.

VIDEO: Bus sign: Spankliness is Next to Godliness! The Church of Eternal Spanktification. This bus will take you there!

VIDEO: Joe looking almost suspicious, as though he almost can't believe his good fortune.

NARR: OK, I knew what the church was all about, that they did indeed have a spanking device, and where to find the church. But would I one day be successful as a detective and not have to go back to being a bank teller?

(PAUSE)

NARR: I didn't get an answer. I knew I was pushing my luck at that point.

NARR: At any rate, this wasn't the type of down-and-dirty, grind-it-out fact-finding that my professors had taught me back at Detective Correspondence School. I'd like to see the look on their faces now. Not that I'd ever seen their faces, it being a correspondence school. But I figured they were all distinguished scholars, and hung out in libraries in front of big fireplaces.

VIDEO: One older woman, glasses, beehive, filing her nails, smoking, in a bathrobe or sweatshirt with DCS on it, cradling a phone on her shoulder.

VIDEO: Joe on the bus.

SFX: Bus revving up and leaving.

NARR: Well, it was time to pay a visit to the Church.

TRANSITION

VIDEO: Looking up at big sign: Church of Eternal Spanktification. Smiley faces on each side. "Over 4 million spanked."

SFX: From inside. Big, creaky doors opening, Joe's silhouette in doorway, light pouring in from behind him, all is dark inside.

JOE: Hello?

VOICE: You entered without knocking—that's very naughty, indeed! And you know what we do with naughty people!

JOE: I take it you don't let 'em off with a verbal warning.

VOICE: OK, maybe just this once! Hi, there, new guy! I'm the Reverend Alan Lewyah.

VIDEO: Alan has one huge arm and a big, flat hand.

JOE: Name's Destruction, Joe Destruction.

ALAN: My, with a name like that, you must have done an awful lot of naughty things.

JOE: I guess.

ALAN: Well, the first spanking is free! What do you say?

JOE: Uh, no thanks, and just in case anybody here gets any ideas, I wore four pairs of underwear here today.

ALAN: Oh, you are one bad boy!

JOE: I'm a private eye. Mind if I ask you a few questions?

ALAN: Certainly.

JOE: What is the Church of the Entirely--

ALAN: Church of Eternal Spanktification. And I'd LOVE to tell you about it. Here, sit.

VIDEO: Both sit in altar-like chairs, somewhat throne-like, with Alan being in the bigger, central chair.

ALAN: Hit it, guys!

VIDEO: Choir loft is dark, spotlight hits it, like a Broadway production.

MUSIC: Music starts up slowly.

BOB: I have lots of questions about life, Suzy.

SUZY: Well, the Church of Eternal Spanktification has the answers, Bob!

BOB: Answers? Like what?

SUZY: Like this--

MUSIC: Kicks in.

SUZY: (Singing) Spanking! For when you've misbehaved! Spanking! For the true, the proud the brave! Spanking is the way it's gotta be! Spanking is the only way for me!

CHORUS: Spanking is the only way for me!

VIDEO: Suzy with her hand up, smiling.

VIDEO: Shot of Joe. Joe's eyebrows wince with the slaps.

BOB: I've been bad, Suzy!

SUZY: We know what to do about that!

SFX: Slap!

BOB: Ow! Ow! ... WOW!

SUZY: Feel better now?

BOB: Why, yes, yes, I do!

SUZY: Then let's go!

SFX: Slapping solo, very rhythmic, punctuated by OWs!

JOE: I can't believe they're doing that to each other.

CHORUS: Spanktification. It's the human touch, and when it's done, say Spank You Very Much! Yes, Spanking is for all of us, especially for me!

SFX: Alan applauding.

ALAN: Wonderful! (To Joe) Any questions?!

JOE: Yeah ... Why?

ALAN: According to Newsweek, Spanktification is the third-fastest-growing Protestant splinter religion in the United States! And the reason we're so darned popular?

JOE: You got me.

ALAN: (Shrieking with joy) Because! We took religion and all that complicated stuff and we made it simple! You do something naughty, you get spanked! Don't you just LOVE it?!

JOE: Well, I, uh ...

ALAN: Mr. D., in a world of moral uncertainty, people are nostalgic for a time when the term "clear-cut" referred to moral issues and not forests! In short, they're nostalgic for spankings.

JOE: I don't look back fondly on any of my spankings--

ALAN: Oh, yes, spankings. As the new age movement has taught us, Mr. D., we all have inner children in need of nurturing and so naturally, they must also need an occasional spanking. And that's what our church is all about. Check with your inner child, Mr. Destruction. I'm sure he's been one very destructive little beastie indeed.

JOE: I'll take him for a walk later and ask him about it. Now, I'd like to ask you a few questions about the death of Martin William Gagne.

ALAN: Go right ahead!

JOE: Did you know him?

ALAN: Know him? He was a member of our church.

JOE: Interesting. The police are treating this as a suicide. Do you think the Senator spanked himself to death?

ALAN: No, I don't think that's even a remote possibility.

JOE: Any idea who might've done it?

ALAN: Why, half of our congregation probably wanted to give him the whuppin' of his life.

JOE: It seems to me in a place like this, they'd get their chance.

ALAN: You'd think! But the Senator wasn't one to be spanked. Oh, no, all HE wanted to do was spank. We kept trying to work with him, tried to get him to understand--Senator, the point of the Church of Eternal Spanktification is not to be always handing out spankings, but to be getting them as well! I think it's safe to say that he didn't at all buy into the idea that giving a spanking is going to hurt me more than it's going to hurt you. All he'd say was it's better to give than to receive.

JOE: Was he spanking anyone in particular? Anyone who might've held a grudge?

ALAN: Mr. Destruction, I'm sure you understand that's privileged church information.

JOE: It's all right. I'm a quasi-member of the law.

ALAN: Good, 'cause tattling'll earn me eight spankeroonees! Youch!

JOE: Right.

ALAN: I can tell you the people William spanked fell into two distinct groups: Attractive ladies and people who he suspected hadn't voted for him.

JOE: Any idea who broke into your warehouse and stole a spanking machine last night?

ALAN: The S-2000.

JOE: The S-huh?

ALAN: S-2000, the flagship of the fleet. No, but if it was William, he wouldn't use it on himself.

JOE: Reverend, I didn't think when I got into this field I'd be asking questions like I'm about to ask, but tell me straight: Do you think a man could spank himself to death?

ALAN: In all seriousness, no, Mr. Destruction, I don't.

JOE: What about your spanking machine? Could that spank a man to death?

ALAN: I guarantee that machine is 100% safe, Mr. Destruction. Oh, it'll spank you like nobody's business, but it does not kill people. However, we are aware that in some circles there might be parties who would be interested in making certain--modifications--

JOE: Modifications?

ALAN: It's hard to imagine, but some people just don't share our vision of what healthy, moral spanking is all about.

JOE: Maybe you could tell me more about your vision.

ALAN: I will tell you this: We're going global, Mr. Destruction; and you'll hear all about it when you turn your TV on tonight.

JOE: Can you give me a hint?

ALAN: Love to, but spilling the beans'll get me five to ten! Ow-ow-ow-ow-wow-WOW!!

JOE: I'm not going to press you on that one.

ALAN: Spank you VERY much!

TRANSITION

VIDEO: Joe sitting in easy chair in front of TV.

JOE: Click. Click, click, click. Yo, Billy ...

VIDEO: Billy standing next to TV, wearing rabbit ears, holding a frying pan in one hand, fork in the other, antenna attached to his head.

BILLY: (Sighs.) Joe, that is not a remote control, that's a calculator, and it doesn't change channels, I do. Wouldn't it be easier if we just got cable?

JOE: Can't afford it. Raise the frying pan a little higher. ...Great.

VIDEO: TV glow changes on Joe's face as channels are changed.

SFX: Channels changing.

VIDEO: (Of the segment below) Joe is watching TV, and it blinks on him; he's what you see and the changing light on him. Mostly audio, with close-ups of Joe's face, either blank, or eyes narrowing.

ALAN: Birth. A wonderful moment of light and celebration.

JOE: Shh, that's the guy, listen.

ALAN: A baby appears, is welcomed into the world, then--

MUSIC: Changes--upbeat, cheesy.

(SFX: Spank, crying)

ALAN: --with a good spank, life in this world begins!

MUSIC: Changes, more upbeat

ALAN: Hi there! This is the Reverend Alan Lewya from the Church of Eternal Spanktification, the third-fastest growing protestant splinter religion in the U.S.! Many of our flock have appealed to us, saying, Church is once a week; what do we do if we're naughty during the week? We don't want to wait all week to become guilt-free again.

Now, you know the Reverend Alan would love to come home with you to help you and yours be spanktified, but he can't be everywhere among the devoted flock, and a man's hand gets mighty sore. People, the Church of Eternal Spanktification is proud to become the first mail-order, in-home church in human history! Yes, religion in the comfort of your very own home! Presenting--our new line of Home Spanktification equipment!

MUSIC: Up and dramatic or cheesy infomercial.

ALAN: Introducing--the Guilt-Buster! You climb aboard this baby when you HAVEN'T been exercising!

VIDEO: Machine slowly, rhythmically spanking a man in workout clothes.

MACHINE: (Mechanically) You should exercise more for good health and a long life. You're a bad boy, a bad, bad boy.

ALAN: The Family Spanker! Because as we like to say, a family that spans together, stays together. Accommodates up to six!

VIDEO: Quick spanking of a family of six in unison.

FAMILY: Ow! ... Ow! ... Ow!

ALAN: For those of you concerned about the environment, there's the Solar Spank-o-matic.

VIDEO: Kid being very slowly spanked, rhythmically.

GUY: (Not painfully, but almost bored) Ow ... ow... ow...

ALAN: Relying on solar cells, it's good as long as the sun's out.

VIDEO: Sun goes behind a cloud.

GUY: Ahhhh.

VIDEO: Sun comes out from behind cloud. Spanking begins again.

GUY: Ow...ow...ow...

SFX: Drum roll and dramatic music.

ALAN: And now, the flagship of the new home spanktification fleet! The S-2000! Portable, light, multi-speed. Set at a low speed, it'll even pat the dog! Gentle enough to spank your live-in grandmother or grandfather when they get cranky. : People, you know ordering your own home spanktification device is the right thing to do. And when yours arrives in the mail, you can hook it up right away and give yourself a good spanking for not ordering sooner. Don't delay! Call today. 1-555-Spanker. All major credit cards accepted. This is the Reverend Alan Lewyah urging you to call now. Spank you for listening and remember: Spanking begins at birth; shouldn't it last a lifetime?

SFX: Phone rings.

SFX: Frying pan getting dropped, static coming on TV.

BILLY: Office of Joe Destruction, Private Eye. Mr. Destruction? He's quite busy; let me see if he

can break away. Please hold.

VIDEO: Billy hums muzak into phone. Hands phone to Joe.

FRANCIS: (Over phone) Quit the humming, Billy, and hand me over to Destruction.

JOE: Destruction here.

FRANCIS: Yeah, Frank--I mean, Francis here. We got a preliminary fingerprint report back from the lab. Gagne had more fingerprints on his butt than a public telephone.

JOE: Thanks. I'm coming over.

SFX: Hangs up.

BILLY: By the way, Joe, here are the photographs you wanted me to track down.

VIDEO: Huge stacks.

JOE: Those Japanese sure take a lot of pictures. Thanks.

TRANSITION

MUSIC: Joe Destruction theme without sing.

JOE: So, Francis, whatta we got for fingerprints?

FRANCIS: Whatta we got? We got a carnival o' fingerprints. We got everybody in the city spankin' the man.

JOE: A gang spank?

FRANCIS: Can't tell. Could be one by one, could be a group all at once. And it seems some of Gagne's fingerprints are mixed in with all the others. The lab is running a few more tests to find out if it's possible for a man to spank himself.

VIDEO: A lab-coated guy with diagram in background, standing over Gagne's face-down body on table, holding Gagne's arm up and letting it drop on Gagne's butt.

SFX: Slap.

FRANCIS: Let's follow the suicide theory through. Gagne converts to the Church of Eternal Spanktification, starts feeling remorse for a life of womanizing and bribe-taking and decides to end it all by using the spanking machine.

JOE: But where's the machine?

FRANCIS: Theory two.

JOE: Someone killed him. And if someone wanted Gagne dead--

FRANCIS: Who didn't? And in any case, you'd think they'd make sure he was found in the machine, to give 'em an alibi.

JOE: I think there are two types of people in the world--spankers and spankees. Though I could be wrong about that because I'm not sure which category I'd be in. But my point is, if Gagne was a spanker, it seems unlikely he'd spank himself to death.

PAUSE

FRANCIS: You realize what you're trying to do, don't you?

JOE: Get inside the mind of a spanker, I know. The private eye business isn't for the squeamish.

FRANCIS: So if he didn't spank himself to death, then who did?

JOE: Take your pick.

FRANCIS: Huh?

JOE: Take a look at these photos.

FRANCIS: Where'd you get 'em?

JOE: Same place I always look when I need to get pictures. Japanese tourists. Those people take pictures of everything.

VIDEO: Shows photos of mundane, everyday things: Pigeon, tree, car, fire hydrant, street sign, sky with clouds.

JOE: Here we've got a pigeon, a tree, a car, a parking meter.... And the lottery prize--the honorable Gagne on the State House steps.

FRANCIS: He's in the spanking machine.

JOE: The S-2000.

FRANCIS: S-2000, huh? So, you got the lingo down and everything, Joe. How interesting.

JOE: Yeah, how interesting. Now, look at this one.

FRANCIS: No machine.

JOE: Precisely.

VIDEO: Gagne on the state house steps, butt up, no spanking machine.

JOE: Now check these out. They're in chronological order.

VIDEO: Gagne getting slapped by a person.

FRANCIS: You've found the killer!

JOE: Maybe, maybe not. Keep watching.

VIDEO: Several other people striking and kicking Gagne, one by one, including unlikely people such as a fireman, old lady and others, culminating in a small mob carrying sticks and purses-- nothing too violent. Someone hangs a "Spank Me" sign on his butt.

FRANCIS: Oh. Uh-huh. Hey, that's my landlady.

JOE: That's my garbage man.

FRANCIS: And the girl at the drive-through.

JOE: And my mom. That's just embarrassing, ma. Francis, what did the coroner say the time of death was?

FRANCIS: Between 7:00 and nine pm.

JOE: Right. Now these are great photos and they tell a lot and they would probably even make a lot of this state's constituents very happy, but I don't think they're the crucial shots.

FRANCIS: No?

JOE: These were all taken after 9:00.

FRANCIS: Are you sure?

JOE: Positive. The Japanese all used the same tour bus, and it makes hourly stops at all the city's highlights.

FRANCIS: So, Gagne was already dead by the time half the city took turns spanking him.

JOE: Looks that way. I got a hunch this is the key photo.

VIDEO: Photo with Gagne in machine; part of a red compact car shows.

FRANCIS: How come?

JOE: This photo of Gagne in the spanking machine is the latest one we got. Taken by a Japanese who couldn't get to sleep after watching Cats on Ice.

FRANCIS: That'd keep me up!

JOE: This one was taken closest to the time of the break-in at the Church of the Spankful--

FRANCIS: Church of Eternal Spanktification

JOE: That rolls right off your tongue, Francis.

FRANCIS: Ha, ha. So the S-2000--

JOE: Probably wasn't the murder weapon.

FRANCIS: But was probably placed there--

JOE: By the person who committed the murder.

FRANCIS: That's some brilliant detective work.

JOE: Thank the Japanese.

FRANCIS: Obrigato.

JOE: Now, who spanked the good senator to death?--that's the question.

VIDEO: Joe has coat and hat back on.

FRANCIS: Where are you going?

JOE: To find some more Japanese.

COMMERCIAL

(SFX: Phone rings)

JOE: Destruction here.

FRANCIS: Are ye ready to go to the funeral?

JOE: All set.

FRANCIS: I'll pick you up in 10 minutes.

JOE: Great.

SFX: Hangs phone up.

BILLY: Where you going, Joe?

JOE: To solve a murder.

BILLY: You know who you're looking for? Oh, goody!

JOE: Yep. I just don't know who it is yet.

TRANSITION

VIDEO: Silhouettes standing around in a circle, grave in the middle, tree nearby. Mid-shot of Alan.

ALAN: Martin William Gagne was, well, he was, ... He wasn't such a bad guy.

VOICE FROM CROWD: Yes he was!

ALAN: Well, perhaps Martin had his faults. But goshalmighty, there sure have been some worse characters around!

GUY: Name one!

ALAN: Uhhh ... Charles Manson! Hitler.

VOICE: What's your point?

VOICE 2: My feet are tired!

VOICE 3: I'm hot!

ALAN: But those who know and love him, the people gathered here today--

VOICE 4: We're only here because the will said we had to be or we wouldn't get a dime.

ALAN: Aw, hell, drop the box and let's go. Amen, everyone. Let's go eat.

SFX: Loud boom of the box being dropped from a significant height. Roar of backhoe, dump of earth.

ALAN: Mr. Destruction, I'd like to introduce you to Nanny Hawkins, the woman who raised Martin from childhood.

JOE: Pleased to meet you. Why did you do it?

NANNY: Excuse me?

JOE: Kill Martin William Gagne. Why'd you do it?

NANNY: Why, I didn't kill him.

JOE: Sure you did. I just don't know why.

FRANCIS: How do ye figure, Joe?

JOE: I needed one last photograph to fill in the blanks. And thanks to the honorable residents of the island nation of Japan, I got it. One more photo of your red car next to the state house steps on

the night of Gagne's murder.

NANNY: Lots of people drive red cars.

JOE: Yeah, but I got an old buddy in the DMV and it seems your license plate's a match.

FRANCIS: Oh, another "old buddy," huh? What are ye payin' him, Destruction?

JOE: Later, Francis.

NANNY: That doesn't prove anything.

JOE: Maybe not. But your car was gone for a while, several hours. Then it reappeared here around three am, around 20 minutes after a spanking machine was stolen from a warehouse across town. Now, I don't have a car--

NANNY: Why not?

JOE: Well, I do, but--long story. But I figure late at night, with no traffic, it's about a twenty minute drive from the warehouse to the state house steps.

VIDEO: All of the following is retold visually in photos.

JOE: I see it this way. You had a long-simmering hatred of Senator Gagne, dating back to when he was a child and sold your precious family heirlooms at an impromptu yard sale in order to finance the purchase of a super slingshot to hunt squirrels, an act that foreshadowed his terrible environmental record. You lured Gagne into a fatal trap behind the State House. Somewhere between five and twelve ninjas leapt out of the bushes and using the ancient martial art of Spank-fu, quickly dispatched Gagne, and dragged his body to the front of the building to be displayed prominently on the state house steps. Meanwhile, you constructed the suicide note. Then you left Gagne there for several hours to be publicly humiliated, which the good people of this city saw to. Then you stole the spanking machine and you put Gagne in it, knowing that he would be heavily photographed by Japanese tourists. Then, for reasons not completely known to me, you later hid the spanking machine. What do you think of my story, Ms. Hawkins?

NANNY: Very imaginative. But what really happened was this: Two days ago, I was watching TV and in the aftermath of Martin's latest hot tub and whipped cream incident I saw him looking sorrier than he ever had in any of the other press conferences during which he's apologized for things.

JOE: --Like when he was caught with the strippers on Air Force One.

FRANCIS: --Or when they found him passed out in the Senate Cloak Room wearing nothing but leather chaps.

WORKMAN: --Or his flashing phase, which he attributed to his drinking.

ALAN: --No, I think you mean his bribe-taking stage, which he attributed to grief surrounding the death of his hamster.

PERSON IN CROWD: --I'm pretty sure that was his influence-peddling stage, which he blamed on his greed.

NANNY: Whatever. I thought just maybe, Martin was going to turn out to be a good boy after all, and perhaps I really had raised him right. And I thought I could get him to finally pay back the \$12,000 he's borrowed from me over the years. So I went downtown to see him at his office. Well, he went on and on about the latest opinion poll showing that people forgave him. He attributed it all to his new drama coach. I gave him a piece of mind then and there. He suggested we go for a walk to calm me down. Which we did, and then it just struck me. I told him, Martin, you pull down your pants this instant; it's time for a long-overdue spanking. Well, he ran, giggling, up the state house steps. And oh, what's the use, take me in. I don't want to finish.

CROWD: Awwwww. It was just getting good! Yeah, come on! Finish!

JOE: Ms. Hawkins, a staple of every good detective caper is that the guilty always admit to the crime and tell the whole story.

FRANCIS: That was the good old days, before everybody pleaded not guilty. When you could get a confession the old-fashioned way, by a few good knocks to the head!

JOE: Your story, please, Ms. Hawkins.

NANNY: Very well. Naturally, I felt that as a nanny, I'd failed more than the Gagne family. I felt I'd failed the nation. So I spanked him, and it felt pretty good. And he giggled. So I spanked him again. And that felt better. And again, and again, and again and again and again--

FRANCIS: We get the point, Ms. Hawkins.

NANNY: Well, I guess spanked him into unconsciousness, where I'm sure the little runt was dreaming of giggling, which positively infuriated me.

JOE: Mmm.

NANNY: So I gave him one last good spank.

FRANCIS: The fatal spank!

NANNY: I guess so. Well, then I didn't know what to do. So I ran. But in a little while, I found myself actually sort of--skipping.

JOE: Skipping.

NANNY: Yes, skipping. And, and--humming a happy tune. And you know, pretty soon I forgot

all about it. So I went to the carnival across town, and rode the ferris wheel! Then I bowled a couple of games. Then I ran into an old friend of mine, and we had dinner. As we were leaving we ran into some friends who were going to see Tom Jones over at the Paradise. We just love Tom Jones. So we went along, and I caught his underwear! Well, finally, around three in the morning, we were all going home and I remembered Martin and thought I'd darn well better do something about him.

JOE: So that's when your shady underworld thugs broke into the warehouse to steal the spanking machine.

NANNY: Wrong again. I stole the machine myself, left Martin's wallet at the warehouse, composed a suicide note en route, put him in the machine, went home to bed, and I must say, slept rather well. And that's my story.

JOE: But you did kill Martin William Gagne.

NANNY: You did get that little part right.

JOE: I'm glad of that.

FRANCIS: What tipped you off, Joe?

JOE: It started to click when I got a look at Gagne's wallet, and specifically what was in the wallet: His first senatorial paycheck since Congress voted itself another pay raise. Now, have you ever known a member of Congress to let anything come between them and a buck? I decided there's no way he'd have left it there, even if he WAS suicidal.

FRANCIS: Not bad at all! I'll take over from here, Joe.

VIDEO: EPILOGUE. Pics of city streets.

NARR: Nanny Hawkins was charged with second degree murder. But common consensus had it that she'd go free quicker than that thing where if you love it you let it go and if it was yours it comes back and if it doesn't it never was. I thought about that analogy for a minute and got a sick feeling all through my stomach. The thing was, the chronology of the murder was still a little out of whack. The exact time of Gagne's death was finally determined to be around 9:00, at which time Nanny Hawkins was catching Tom Jones' underwear, and she has witnesses. So, the fatal blow could've been delivered by anyone.

(SFX: Gong)

MUSIC: Japanese.

VIDEO: Meanwhile, 10,000 miles away ...

(Translations of Japanese on screen)

JAPANESE PERSON: (In Japanese) Ah, your pictures from the USA.

JAPANESE PERSON II: Yes, see the squirrel on the man's butt!

JII: What's he doing?

JIII: When you line the pictures up and flip them quickly, you can see.

JII: He's kicking the man's butt!

JIII: Ha, ha, ha!

JII: Ha, ha, ha!

VIDEO: Cityscape again, zooming in slowly on Joe and Billy.

NARR: Anyway, the Reverend Alan Lewyah and the Church of Eternal Spanktification were waiting to see which way the wind was blowing, but were considering making Nanny Hawkins the church's first patron saint. As for me, I didn't get paid for the case, but I got something to put on my resume. I was on my way to hit up ma for some more cash.

WOMAN: Mr. Destruction?

JOE: Yeah?

MOM: Mr. Destruction, I'm Marlene Wattle. My kids have something to tell you. Go ahead.

VIDEO: Twins--boy and girl.

KID I: We're sorry we tried to blow you up yesterday, Mr. Destruction.

JOE: That was you, huh?

KID II: And the day before that and the day before that. And this morning.

JOE: Heh, heh. (Sing song) Missed me, yuh missed me.

KID I: We DIDN'T miss.

MOM: Mr. Destruction, I'd appreciate your help on this one.

JOE: Right. Listen, kids, you shouldn't oughta be going around trying to blow people up, even if they're supposedly impossible to blow up. By the way, what'd you hit me with?

KID II: A particle beam cannon!

KID I: We built it in our basement.

JOE: A particle what?

KID I: It's basically a big laser.

KID II: Johnny Barstow said you couldn't be blown up.

JOE: Johnny was right. But you wrecked my best fedora. And you gave me a heck of a tan on the left side of my face.

VIDEO: Joe faces camera with a distinct line down the middle of his face. One half is tan, the other white.

MOM: I knew I should've made you stick with those violin lessons. Where'd you kids get yourselves the parts to build a laser cannon?

KID I: Mail order from Russia!

JOE: Heh, heh. Kids today.

KID I: They're selling off all sorts of high technology.

KID II: Anything for hard cash.

KID I: We wanted a nuclear submarine but it cost too much to mail it.

MOM: Latch key kids today. Leave them alone for two hours every afternoon and look what happens. Where'd you two get the money?

KID II: We saved our allowances!

KID I: Our allowances go quite a ways in Russia.

MOM: That's it. If I've said it once, I've said it a hundred times. Your allowance money is not to be used to buy junk food, toys, or, or high technology from the former Soviet Union.

KID II: By the way, why do you suppose it is you can't be blown up?

JOE: I dunno, something in my genes, I guess.

KID I: ... Genes!

KID II: Genetic research!

BOTH: Geeeene splicing!

KID I: We've gotta go.

KID II: See you later!

VIDEO: Joe and the Mom, backs to the camera, watching the kids run away.

JOE: You suppose I oughta be worried now?

MOM: If I were you? Yeah.

END

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