

JUICE

by

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a one hour pilot

ACT ONE

Sinatra kicks in with the intro to: "World on a String."

EXT. HUGE EMPTY LOT - OFF THE STRIP - DAY

Everything is SLOWED and DESATURATED. Like a memory. A furious WIND WHIPS dust and debris everywhere.

All eyes on a young man, 26, beaming with confidence and good looks. He rolls up his shirt sleeves and scoops up the first shovel of dirt at a ground-breaking ceremony.

FREEZE FRAME and SUPER: NICKY ZARA

Nicky's the new golden boy of Vegas. A young man who's finally coming into his own after growing up in the shadow of his larger-than-life father, the burly, cowboy-hat-wearing character who's standing to the side applauding with the BANKING PARTNERS, LAWYERS, and FRIENDS and FAMILY. As Nicky's father expertly spits tobacco juice...

FREEZE FRAME and SUPER: TOMMY ZARA, a.k.a. TOMMY Z

TOMMY Z V.O.

To me a joint's a joint. I don't care how pretty it is, it still comes down to the same sound business principles...

Two other stand-outs in the crowd are Nicky's younger sister, 21, a student at UNLV (Gaming and Pre-Law majors), a force of nature with wild hair and style and a big chip on her shoulder....

FREEZE FRAME and SUPER: KATE ZARA

TOMMY Z V.O.

...You give 'em a good gamble, good whisky, cheap, and you'll do alright...

Eyeing Kate is the Zara's business partner, a notorious Vegas mogul, mid-40s dressed like an elegant gangster...

FREEZE FRAME and SUPER: DALE McCLINTOCK - PARTNER

The photographers fire away as Nicky tosses the dirt in the bed of a truck.

(MORE)

...But my eldest son, Nicky, he wanted a carpet joint for his generation. And who am I to stand in his way?

More applause. Tommy salutes Nicky but his son's too dazzled by all the attention he's getting, especially from a sharp looking young woman, 26. They can't stop staring at each other... *"What a world, what a life, I'm in love..."*

FREEZE and SUPER: CAROLINE BLACKMOORE - NICKY'S GIRL

She stands next to her father, a gentlemen banker from North Carolina.

FREEZE and SUPER: CARL BLACKMOORE - BANKER

Carl looks up at a banner above that reads, **"Future Home of The Oasis Casino Resort"**.

A STRONG GUST strains it and it breaks free and flaps away in the breeze...

CUT TO:

EXT. THE OASIS CASINO RESORT - NIGHT

Opening Night. It's a mad house. Like a big, Hollywood premiere but tackier and a lot more fun.

LEGEND: "One Year Later"

The HUGE LINE wrapped around the building is for "the public" who won't be let in until the doors officially open at 9pm. It's a young, hip looking crowd with a lot of single women in small groups.

Strolling down the red carpet are the invited guests (6,000 on the list) who'll get an early look at the latest new casino in Vegas. Sprinkled in the mix are a few A-list celebs but a lot more C-listers. There's Sam Jackson. Cool. Vince Neal. Whatever. Dennis Rodman, of course. Paris Hilton making a splash in a dress made out of one million dollars in newly minted Oasis Chips. Sugar Ray Leonard. Very cool.

Parading up and down the red carpet are a dozen practically Naked Young Beauties dressed up as PALM TREES who are "hostessing" the event. They wear green paint and not much else except a few PALM FRONDS they use like fan dancers.

Tommy Z, dressed in what I call "Cowboy Pimp," is in the middle of a TV interview with a pretty, LOCAL TV REPORTER who holds a microphone. A dozen FRIENDS, a colorful bunch with character-etched faces, surround him including one of his oldest cronies, a once-upon-a-time notorious Mafia deal-maker who's now long retired in his 80s...

FREEZE and SUPER: BUDDY SPINELL - RETIRED BOOKIE

Tommy's imparting some of his typical outlaw rap that the press eats up like candy. As he talks, his eyes keep straying to the cutest of the palm tree girls...

FREEZE and SUPER: MOLLY HALLIDAY - WANNABE ACTRESS

TV REPORTER

So why now, why sell the successful Golden Stallion downtown and finally open a big casino?

TOMMY Z

Hell, we could have done this twenty years ago if we wanted. But unlike some other cats around town...

(seeing Dale)

...speak of the devil, I didn't need a big, tall building to compensate for shortcomings in other departments.

Everyone chuckles on cue as Dale McClintock approaches with his date, a beautiful woman, 40s, who's the City Attorney, JOANA GRACE, and an assistant, a young German who's always impeccable, LARS. Dale, dressed in a sharp, Italian cut suit, looks like he might slug Tommy but gives him a kiss on the cheek instead. Dale's an odd duck, always full of surprises in Christopher Walken kinda way.

DALE

I love this man. Can't help it.
We all have our pasts.

Dale smiles and Tommy chuckles as he wipes off the kiss.

THROUGH TV CAMERA

TV REPORTER

City Attorney, Joana Grace, and Dale McClintock, owner of The Olympus Casino Resort. Dale, what was your role in all of this?

DALE

Nothing much. I had an oddly shaped piece of land, off the strip, that nobody wanted. Even me. Tommy Z turned into this.

The moment is broken by girls screaming for someone getting out of a limo. Tommy looks over and is pleasantly surprised to see it's his son, Nicky.

ON NICKY ZARA

who hears the girls screaming and looks around to see who it's for, not realizing it's for himself. He offers a hand to his fiancée, Caroline, dressed sharp, conservative, and elegant as always. She steps out of the limo followed by Kate who's dressed on the trashy side and is a little drunk already. More screams and Nicky wonders...are they saying "Nicky?"

NICKY

Unreal.

CAROLINE

(smiling)

Try to keep your head from blowing up too big. We have to fit it through the front door.

Nicky walks ahead, waving at his newfound fans who scream and wave back. Kate leans into Caroline.

KATE

You must hate People's "Most Eligible Bachelor List?"

CAROLINE

Can I sue them to get my anonymous fiancée back?

KATE

Don't sweat it, fifteen minutes is only like five these days.

Caroline laughs as they join Nicky who's on Cloud 9 until MANNY SANCHEZ, a vet reporter who writes a local color column for The Nevada Sun, pushes his way up.

MANNY

Nicky Zara, in view of your father's association with convicted felons, do you think it's going to be hard for you to maintain your gaming license?

Nicky is annoyed but he keeps a professional demeanor, practicing the corporate polish he'll need to take his family's company public some day. But Kate can't help herself. She knows Manny.

KATE

How about the shady women I've seen you with around town, Manny. Maybe they should take away your journalist's licence. Oh that's right, you don't need one to be a gossip columnist.

Manny chuckles as he finishes writing. Nicky looks at Caroline, "What can you do? She's a loose canon."

KATE (CONT'D)

You can quote me on that.

MANNY

Is it true your father served 2 years in--

NICKY

I don't know what you're talking about? We're here to celebrate our opening. And you're here to cover--

A hyper young Publicist, PETER, suddenly pulls Nicky away.

NICKY (CONT'D)

What!?! It's not a problem.

PETER

Your father at three o'clock.

Nicky looks back and sees Tommy Z parting the crowd like Moses on the Red Sea.

PETER (CONT'D)

He's supposed to stay fifteen feet away from you at all times.

KATE

Told you we needed to tie him up.

PETER

One picture of you with him in the paper tomorrow is going to stink up all the good PR we've been doing.

Nicky notices Manny directing a Photographer to get a shot, Nicky tries shaking his head, "no," at his father to ward him off, but the ol' man keeps coming.

Tommy pushes in and bear hugs his son and the press goes to town with the photo op. Tommy laughs, loves it. Nicky hides his frustration. His dad talks in his ear.

TOMMY Z

Do you have any idea how proud I am to have a son like you?

Nicky looks in his dad's eyes and sees how genuine he is and relaxes. What the hell? It's his dad's night too.

The press get their fill of father and son shots while Kate stands to the side feeling left out as usual and we go into SLOW MOTION and MOVE IN ON NICKY, churning with conflicting emotions...

CUT TO:

TITLE SEQUENCE

INT. THE OASIS CASINO - FLOOR - NIGHT

QUICK MONTAGE

Later that night, the opening night party is in full swing with standing room only at the tables. We see DICE TUMBLING. CARDS played. Mingling. Sexy laughter. And in the middle of it all...

SLOW MOTION ON - Tommy Z with his CREW at the main bar where he's holding court.

MOLLY V.O.

He said he wanted me to show me the six-hundred a fifty million dollar view...

As Tommy speaks he eyes Molly, 20, the pretty young Palm Tree Girl he spotted earlier, at the other end of the bar and he catches her eye. She smiles, flattered with the attention from the big man. As we watch, we hear an emotionally distraught young woman tell her story...

MOLLY V.O. (CONT'D)

...I told him that just because I'm a "palm tree girl" doesn't mean that I'd just hop on the elevator and take a ride with him. Cause I knew who he was.

MOMENTS LATER

Tommy has moved over by Molly and is whispering in her ear.

MOLLY V.O.

And he said...

TOMMY Z

If you say 'no' I'm gonna look like a chump in front of my friends back there. But if you say 'yes' I promise to be a perfect gentlemen and will be forever grateful.

Tommy looks in Molly's eyes with his Paul Newman blues and offers Molly his arm. She takes it, against her better judgment, and they walk away from the bar. Tommy shoots a look back over at his friends who laugh and wave.

CUT TO:

INT. ELEVATOR - NIGHT

Tommy and Molly are riding up together to the top floor. She looks at him, nervously but Tommy's buoyant smile relaxes her.

TOMMY

Thank you...

MOLLY

Molly.

TOMMY

Molly. So, if it's okay, I thought we'd have a glass of champagne, look at the bright lights, and, if you want, you can tell me if there's anything I can do for you to return the favor, cause I am much obliged.

She remains suspicious but Tommy's openness has an undeniable charm.

MOLLY

You just wanted your friends to see you going up the elevator with me?

TOMMY

Smart girl.

MOLLY

Why me?

TOMMY

Cause you are a vision of loveliness, Molly. But do not worry. I'm way too old for you. And I'm happy to just enjoy your company for even a few minutes.

He means it.

CUT TO:

EXT. SULTAN'S SUITE TERRACE - NIGHT

Tommy walks out onto the terrace with Molly. It's a beautiful, clear night and the lights of the strip, about a half mile away, are stunning. Molly is impressed.

TOMMY Z

So here it is, the six hundred million dollar view. What do you think?

MOLLY

Looks worth it to me. Give or take a hundred mil.

Tommy smiles. She's got some sass. He begins opening a bottle of CHAMPAGNE that's waiting on ice.

TOMMY Z

A lot of people said it was stupid to open a joint so far off the strip but I just fell in love with the view.

Tommy hands her a GLASS OF CHAMPAGNE.

MOLLY

So it's not always about money, is it?

TOMMY Z

Well, yes it is. But there is a kind of poetry in money.

MOLLY

"Poetry?"

TOMMY Z

(gesturing to the lights)

You see, this town, it's just a mirror of what people truly want in their hearts. And if you're good at giving 'em their heart's desire, they're going to reward you with money.

MOLLY

What about culture, morality, stuff like that?

TOMMY Z

If I could fill the floor with high rollers by putting on an opera, or preaching sermons, I would.

(holds glass for toast)

To the brightest light in Vegas tonight, right in front of me.

She can't help but smile.

CUT TO:

INT. CASINO FLOOR - NIGHT

CLOSE ON - A PAIR OF DICE, big as boulders, tumbling across the green felt.

It's 4:10 am and there's still "standing room only" at the tables. Some N.B.A. stars have taken over a craps table and a few of the Palm Tree Girls are helping them bless the dice in interesting ways...

Keeping an eye on it all is a sharply dressed man in a black suit and black shirt as he cruises the floor, 50s...

FREEZE and SUPER: JOHN CROWDER - CASINO MANAGER

John, an ex-homicide detective from Brooklyn, is a Vegas insider, low key, solid, prides himself on knowing who's who at his tables. He's in a grand mood tonight. He likes his new employers and the classy, adult casino they've built.

Kate comes walking up to talk to him.

KATE

Hey John, I just found out we've got a couple of spies undercover from the gaming commission.

JOHN

Where?

KATE

Out by the pool. Dressed like pimps. We can not, under any circumstances, afford to have any more acts of lewd behavior going on in the cabanas.

JOHN

I'll put a few more guys on patrol. Excuse me.

John answers his pulsing phone and we watch his face as he takes in some very bad news. As always, he's a professional.

JOHN (CONT'D)

Is there an ambulance on the way?
...Okay, I'll make the call. And
Kate's right here.

He hangs up and looks at her and she sees that it's serious.

CUT TO:

INT. THE CAMEL CLUB - NIGHT

On any given night, there is one club somewhere in the world that is the hottest place to be on the planet. Tonight this is that club. State of the art lighting, multi-level dance floors, foggers, great sound, and the most talented Go-Go Dancers in the free world.

NICKY'S BOX SUITE

Nicky and about a dozen FRIENDS and HANGERS-ON are in one of a dozen swanky boxes that overhang the floor. This one has the most privacy and a perfect view of the whole club. He's still too wound-up to relax but has a stub of a CIGAR in one hand and a SNIFTER in the other. He looks over at Caroline who's with a group of women who are discussing which dancer the guys will want and why they always pick the wrong one.

Caroline meets Nicky's eye and they converge in the middle of the room. They have to talk right in each other's ear to be heard.

CAROLINE
You having fun yet?

NICKY
I don't know. You?

CAROLINE
Relax. The interviews are over and
The Oasis is a smash. And you did
it. And now I think it's time for
a little victory dance with your
girl.

She starts doing a sexy sway to the music which brings a smile to Nicky's face. They start dancing. The others join in and it's all good for a few moments before Nicky's PHONE goes off. He answers but can't hear much. Nicky walks out the door of the box suite and into -

INT. HALLWAY - CONTINUOUS

Now he hears the shocking news and is stunned. Too stunned to reply right away.

NICKY
Yeah, I heard you.
(a beat)
I'm okay. I'll meet you there.
(hangs up)

Nicky walks down the hall until he comes to TWO SECURITY MEN who snap to attention. He passes through the door.

Caroline pops her head out of the box suite looking for Nicky but he's already gone.

CUT TO:

INT. SULTAN'S SUITE - SUNRISE

Nicky is listening to Molly's story while his head swims. Kate stands next to him on the verge of tears.

Their father's DEAD BODY lies on the bed in the b.g. The sheets are stained with green grease paint and a PALM LEAF lies on the floor. A PAIR OF MEDICS are there prepping to take the body.

John is questioning Molly about what happened.

JOHN

So go on.

MOLLY

And then we just kept drinking...he made me laugh and, I don't know, we did it. And everything went fine but then a few minutes after... I noticed he hadn't moved.

She breaks down again.

MOLLY (CONT'D)

I'm so sorry...

Kate fights back tears. John picks up his phone and listens to someone on the other end. He waits for Nicky while holding the phone.

NICKY

It's not your fault. My father knew he had a weak heart so don't blame yourself. Just tell the story to the sheriff when he gets here. I'll help you. And we'll keep your name out of the press but I'll need you to sign an agreement that says you won't repeat this story to anyone who has no business hearing it. My family considers the circumstances of my father's death to be very personal.

She nods slowly.

JOHN

(to Nicky)

The sheriff wants to talk to you.

Nicky sees his father's body being carried out on a stretcher.

NICKY

Tell him it can wait until he gets here.

KATE

It's all right. I'll take it.

As Kate takes the phone, Nicky walks out onto the patio deck to clear his head.

He looks out from the towering precipice, over the strangest and most unique city the world has ever known. He notices two champagne glasses and smiles through his tears.

CUT TO:

A sweet, funny, Calypso version of "Viva Las Vegas" starts...

EXT. BOAT DOCK - DAY

Washing the deck of his early Chris Craft, 26 foot sail boat is Nicky's black sheep younger brother, 24, who's been sailing slowly around the world for the better part of a year. "...gotta whole lotta money that's ready to burn..."

A young Polynesian Boy comes running down the dock. By the looks of the BEAUTIFUL ISLAND in the b.g., we're somewhere in the remote South Pacific.

KID
Phone for you!

PAUL
There's nobody who even knows I'm here.

KID
It's your brother.

FREEZE and SUPER: PAUL ZARA

END OF ACT ONE

ACT TWO

INT. CHURCH - DAY

Somebody hits a button on a sound system and the church fills with The Doors doing "The End."

CLOSE ON the three Zara sibling with their mother, DARCY, an off-beat beauty, 50-ish. They are seated together on the first pew and dressed in black for a funeral...

The huge Catholic church is filled with hundreds of friends and family...

WE CONTINUE PULLING BACK from the faces of the Zaras, each affected by their loss in their own way, until a gold coffin with a pair of COWBOY BOOTS on it, some SILVER SPURS, and a STETSON COWBOY HAT comes into view.